

Post-Operative Instructions – Total Shoulder Replacement

Pre-Op Check List

- Fill narcotic prescription immediately when given to you (or it will expire); do not take narcotics pre-operatively! It is for you to use post-operatively.
- Pre-operative evaluation with your medical doctor (internist) to clear you for surgery.
- Pre-operative blood tests, EKG and chest Xray (all need to be done within 30 days of your surgery).
- Meet with representative from device company for sling fitting and post-op cryotherapy
- Discontinue all aspirin products at least 7 days prior to surgery.
- The Hospital Pre-Op Staff will notify you of your arrival time the afternoon before surgery. If you are not contacted by 3:30pm the day before surgery, please call our office for final instructions at (212) 305-0622.
- Bring your sling and cryotherapy with you to the hospital on day of surgery.
- Do NOT eat or drink anything past midnight the night before surgery.
- Under no circumstances should you write anything on your operative site – this will be done by me in the pre-op holding area on the day of surgery

Surgery Day

- You will be asked to arrive 2 hours before the scheduled surgery time (remember to not eat or drink anything after midnight).
- You will be admitted and meet the nursing staff, anesthesia staff, and one of my team members will most likely meet and examine you as well in the pre-op holding area.
- You will usually have your regional anesthetic placed in the pre-op regional block area.
- Your surgery will be performed and usually lasts 1 ½ - 3 hours.
- You will have your cryotherapy sleeve (if you purchased it) and sling put on either in the operating room or in the recovery room that you were fit for preoperatively.
- You will stay in the recovery room typically 1-2 hours depending on the duration of the regional anesthetic and then will be transferred to the Orthopaedic In-patient Service (usually 7 Garden North).

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Post-operative Day 1

- Do not put any creams or antibiotic agents on the wound.
- You will have physical therapy evaluate you in the morning and start moving your operative extremity to the ranges determined intra-operatively.
- You can come out of the sling 2 times daily to move your **ELBOW, WRIST, and FINGERS**.
- Use your cryotherapy as instructed to decrease swelling and diminish pain.

Post-operative Day 2

- You will be discharged home – discharge is at 10:00am
- You will be given home exercises to perform as instructed by P.T.
- You can shower at home – pat dry the wound and then apply a dry, gauze dressing.
- Leave the white butterfly (steri-strips) covering the wound.
- You should wear the sling at all times when in public and when sleeping.

Post-operative Day 4-10

- You will have an appointment for your 1st post-op visit this week that should have been arranged for you at the time you made your appointment for surgery
- We will snip the suture ends (no sutures need to be removed) and check the wound and give you your formal outpatient Physical Therapy prescription.
- You will continue to wear the sling whenever in public or for sleeping but can come out of it while sitting comfortably in your home.
- Move the elbow, wrist and fingers liberally to decrease gravity-dependent swelling.

Post-operative Weeks 1-6 (2nd Post-operative visit between 4-6 wks post-op)

- Continue advancing range of motion in safe, steady fashion.
- Do not focus or worry about strengthening during this phase at all.
- You can discontinue use of the sling between 4-6 weeks post-op – I will coordinate this with you depending on the progress.

Please call the office in the first day or two after surgery to schedule a post-operative visit. Your appointment should be **7-10 days after surgery**. If at any time there are any signs of infection (**increased swelling, redness, drainage from the incisions, warmth, fever, chills, or severe pain unrelieved by prescribed medications**) or if you have any questions or concerns, contact us at the office.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

- **When can I remove the sling?**
You can take the sling off for showering and to do your elbow, wrist and finger exercises on post op day 1. However, you must wear your sling in public and at night for sleeping for the 1st 4-6 weeks (your physician will specifically discuss duration dependent on the size of the tear and other factors).
- **When can I begin driving?**
Typically, you will be able to resume driving when your sling comes off ~4-6 weeks. While many people do drive earlier than this, keep in mind that it is against the law to drive while in a sling.
- **When can I return to work?**
This really depends on the individual patient specifically with respect to job demands (labor vs desk job). Some patients return to work as soon as 4-7 days post-operatively and others require extensive time away from work if “limited duty” is not available.
- **How long will I have Physical Therapy after the surgery?**
The typical therapy program will be a minimum of 3 months. The 1st phase of therapy will be designed to safely regain your range of motion while the 2nd phase of therapy will be directed at regaining function, strength, and endurance.
- **How much pain will I have?**
This is variable of course but we provide you with an appropriate amount of narcotic pills to keep you comfortable until your 1st post-operative visit. Remember, that most of our patients have regional anesthesia and it is not unusual to have numbness and tingling that can be present for several days following your surgery.
- **When should I call the office with concerns?**
Any signs of infection should be reported immediately – these include increased drainage (usually thick, cloudy, not liquid secondary to the arthroscopy), redness, increased warmth, and fevers (T > 101.8).
- **Will the alarms go off at the airport?**
Actually, it is dependent on the specific machine and how sensitive it is set.