

Post-Operative Instructions - Shoulder Replacement

1. You will need to apply an ice pack to your shoulder postoperatively. This is used for pain and swelling as you are healing. This should be done at least 4 times per day for the first 4-5 days. Make sure there is a light cloth barrier between the ice pack and your skin.
2. Your arm will be in a sling following surgery for 6 weeks. This includes sleeping with it on as well. The most important factor about sling usage and position is comfort for you. Adjust the sling so that it is comfortable on your neck and that your elbow is seated all the way to the back of the sling. I will let you know the exact duration of sling usage at your follow-up visit. Do not use any other sling than what you are provided.
3. You may periodically remove your arm from the sling and bend/straighten your elbow. You may also bend and circle your wrist. **DO NOT MOVE YOUR SHOULDER.** Avoid lifting objects with the surgical arm. You may write and type, but not drive. **DRIVING WITH A SLING ON IS AGAINST THE LAW.** Wait until I clear you to safely operate a vehicle, typically 6 weeks after surgery.
4. You may be more comfortable sleeping in a semi-reclined position following surgery. Two to three pillows behind your back/head and a pillow under the elbow and forearm for comfort works best. If you have a recliner type of chair, it may be more comfortable for resting.
5. Prescriptions for pain medication and an anti-inflammatory will be prescribed for you. Take pain medications with food and plenty of fluids to avoid nausea. Take Aspirin 81 mg twice per day for 4 weeks to reduce the chance of blood clots.
6. You will have a Mepilex island dressing on your shoulder that will remain on for 2 weeks. This dressing is water resistant and will tolerate light showering. Remove the sling for showering, keeping the arm in the sling position or at your side. Wait 48 hours after surgery before showering. Do not submerge your shoulder in a pool, spa, bathtub, or ocean until I clear you to do so. Standing water can be an infection risk.
7. Physical therapy will begin 2-3 weeks after surgery. I will provide a detailed prescription for therapy when you come to the office for your first postoperative appointment.
8. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medication.
9. Returning to work is determined on a case-by-case basis.

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10. When dressing, put your operative arm in the sleeve first. When getting undressed, take your operative arm out last. Loose fitting, button-down shirts are recommended for ease of dressing.
11. Your first postoperative appointment is 10-14 days after surgery. Please ensure you have this appointment scheduled prior to your day of surgery. This is when the dressing will be removed, and the wound checked.