

Shawn Hennigan, MD

Preparing for Total & Reverse Shoulder Arthroplasty Surgery

Before surgery:

- required to ensure you are ready to proceed with surgery and recovery. This may be performed by your primary care physician or one of their associates.
- A CT scan of the affected shoulder may be required for pre-surgical planning purposes. If required, our staff will work with you to get this set up.
- Gabapentin protocol will be initiated 1 week before surgery to help with pain after surgery. This will be called into your preferred pharmacy.
- Follow showering instructions as indicated on your surgery instruction sheet.
- It is highly recommended that you start over the counter **5% Benzoyl Peroxide ointment/gel** and apply this to your shoulder armpit area daily, starting 3 days prior to surgery. This will help reduce infection. Refer to the instruction sheet for more details.
- A preadmissions nurse from the hospital may contact you to provide additional information regarding surgery.
- Please contact the office if you experience any signs or symptoms of illness prior to surgery.
- If any FMLA or disability paperwork is needed, please drop this off at our office. Please note that it can take anywhere from 7-10 business days to complete this paperwork.
- This is considered an inpatient procedure. Most patients will stay 1 night in the hospital. Any additional nights will only be considered if it is medically necessary.
- You will need assistance after surgery with everyday activities including dressing, bathing, and cooking. Often times rehab facilities are not covered by insurance with this type of procedure, so it is the responsibility of the patient and family to make the necessary arrangements for care.

Day of surgery:

- **Nothing** to eat or drink for 8 hours prior to surgery.
- You will be notified of the time to check into the hospital (generally about 2 hours before surgery).
- You will be taken back to a preparation area where the following will occur:
 - Your past medical history will be reviewed.
 - You will be asked to change into a medical gown and an IV will be inserted.
 - The medical staff will wash the surgical area with a special scrub that will reduce the chance for infection.
 - You will meet with both the anesthesiologist and the doctor to discuss any concerns before surgery.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and bring a button or zip-up shirt to wear home.

Surgical Procedure:

- The length of surgery varies, but it generally takes about 2 hours.
- You will be placed into a sling after surgery. The type of sling will depend on what procedure was performed.
- After surgery, you will be moved to the recovery room. Medical staff will monitor your vital signs and administer pain medication, if needed. Once your vital signs are stable and your pain is under control, you will be transferred to your hospital room.

During Recovery:

- IV antibiotics will be given during your hospital stay. These are given to prevent infection.
- Both physical and occupational therapy will be ordered to make sure that you can safely be discharged home.

Managing Your Pain:

- After surgery, you will feel some pain. This is a natural part of the healing process. Your doctor and nurses will work with you to manage your pain levels.
- You may be given a nerve block for pain control. Your arm may feel numb, tingly, and weak for up to 48 hours following surgery.
- Pain medication will be prescribed for short-term pain relief after surgery. You are to use this in addition to your gabapentin prescription. Please refer to the surgery medication protocol included in your surgery packet.
- Be aware that, although opioids (a form of pain medicine) help relieve pain, they can be addictive. Opioid dependency and overdose have become a critical public health issue in the U.S. It is important to only use opioids as directed by your doctor. As soon as your pain begins to improve, stop taking the opioids.

The Days Following Surgery:

- Mild to moderate swelling in the upper and lower arm is common for the first 1-2 weeks after surgery. Use ice for swelling and discomfort by applying it to the affected arm for 20 minutes and then removing it for at least 1 hour. Do this at least 3-4 times daily. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- It is important to wear your sling at all times, including while sleeping, until instructed to stop. The sling may be removed for hygiene purposes only. Let your arm dangle at your side during hygiene care.
- **Absolutely no** reaching, pushing, pulling, or lifting with the affected arm.
- When in bed, have pillows supporting the elbow and affected arm.
- Keep the incision clean and dry. It is okay to shower 24 hours after surgery if there is no active drainage. You may get the incision wet without covering. Gently pat the arm dry and leave the incision open to air. The “zipline closure system” will be removed at your first post-operative appointment. Please avoid soaking in a bathtub or pool until instructed otherwise.
- Continue wearing compression stockings until your first post-operative appointment following surgery.

Rehabilitation:

- A well-planned rehabilitation program is critical to the success of a shoulder replacement. Therapy will begin between 2-6 weeks after surgery. Therapy may be completed at a facility of your choice, or one can be recommended to you.
- If pain makes your therapy sessions difficult, consider taking your pain medication before your appointments so that you can complete the exercises and goals expected of you. Please make sure that you have a driver if pain medication is necessary.
- Therapy will last for approximately 3 months. Once all goals have been met, your therapist will discharge you with a home exercise program. It is important that you continue to do these exercises. You will continue to see functional improvements for 1 year or more after surgery.