



Brent M. Lawrence, MD
(501) 504-6994

Discharge Instructions - Total Shoulder Replacement

Refer to these instructions over the next few weeks. They will provide you with information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital and return home. Your surgeon may also provide you with specific instructions.

Please make arrangements to have someone at home with you at all times for the first 1-2 weeks after surgery.

Incision Care and Dressing Changes

- Dressing changes will start 48 hours after surgery.
- If your incision is dry, you may go without a dressing covering your incision.
- You may experience drainage from your incision for 2-3 days after surgery. If you continue to experience drainage or feel more comfortable, you may apply a lightweight dry dressing to your incision as needed. The nurse should instruct you and your family in dressing changes prior to discharge.
- **DO NOT** apply ointment or cream to your incisions.
- It is very important to prevent infection! Wash your hands prior to dressing changes and use the supplies provided by the hospital at discharge.
- Be very careful handling your pets until your incision is healed. It is recommend that your pet not sit on your lap and you must wash your hands after touching your pet.
- Also, wash your hands after using the restroom.

Bathing and Showering

- If your incisions are dry, you may begin to shower 48 hours after surgery.
- Keep incisions covered with a waterproof bandage or plastic while you shower until sutures/staples are removed.
- When you are finished, pat your incision dry and apply a clean, dry bandage if needed.
- Do not take tub baths or submerge your incision until it is completely healed and sutures/staples are removed. Check with your doctor at your 2 week follow up appointment.

Medications

- You will receive a prescription for **pain medication** upon discharge
- You will not be required to take a blood thinner postoperatively. If you are already on a blood thinner or aspirin, you may resume taking it at home.
- Continue using the **Peridex mouthwash** and **Bactroban nasal ointment** for 10 days after surgery.
- You must take a preventative antibiotic prior to any dental cleaning, dental procedure or any invasive procedure for two years after surgery. Call our office and we can order this for you. This is a measure to help prevent your hip joint from getting infected.

Body Movements/Activity

- Your arm will be placed into a sling following your surgery. You will need to remain in the sling for **6 weeks**. While in the hospital, you will be instructed in how to place and remove the sling and in exercises for the elbow, wrist and hand.
- The sling must be worn at all times but may be removed for general hygiene and exercise. After 2 weeks, you may start shoulder pendulum exercises.
- You should not attempt to perform any shoulder ROM exercises or use the arm to assist in getting up or for any other activities.
- Do not sit for more than 1 hour without standing and stretching.
- Be careful sitting in low chairs as these can sometimes be difficult to get out of after surgery. Chairs with armrests are helpful but you do not need to use the surgical extremity to help push up.
- Do not lie on the operative side for at least the first 3 weeks after surgery. Lying on the side places undue stress on your new shoulder and could cause soreness. Some patients find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner for the first 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- After 6 weeks, you will be referred to outpatient physical therapy to begin ROM and strengthening exercises. Perform your exercises everyday!
- You may have some aching discomfort and swelling in your arm and shoulder for the first several weeks following your operation. This should improve over time with rest and elevation.

Equipment

- You may use ice packs around your shoulder to help reduce pain and swelling. Apply ice for 20-30 minutes at a time. This may be repeated every couple of hours.
- Often times, while in the sling, you will develop swelling in the arm and hand. If this occurs, lie down on your back and elevate the arm at the elbow with your fingers to the ceiling. You may pump your fist while elevated to assist with circulation.
- You may have an elevated bedside commode when you return home. The use of an elevated commode seat is helpful during your recovery. It will allow you to sit comfortably and be independent for bathroom use very early. As your mobility and muscle strength improves, the elevated commode seat can be discontinued.

Driving

- It is safe for most people to return to driving 2-3 months following their surgery.
- We need to make sure your arm is strong and you are off all pain medication prior to returning to driving. You need to be able to control the steering wheel and shift the car without significant effort.
- Talk with your surgeon at your follow up appointments regarding clearance.

Seek Medical Care If...

- You have difficulty breathing.
- Your wound is red, swollen, or has become increasingly painful.
- You have pus draining from your wound.
- You have a bad smell coming from your wound.
- You have persistent bleeding from your wound.
- Your wound breaks open after sutures (*stitches*) or staples have been removed.
- You have a fever greater than 101.5.
- You have a rash.
- You have pain or swelling in your calf or thigh.
- You have shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Persistent vomiting.

It is important that you and your family have a clear understanding of your responsibilities following your surgery. Refer to your "What to Expect?" handout for further instructions.

If you or your family has questions or concerns, please contact Tiffany Falls in our office at (501) 504-6994.