

David B. Cohen, M.D.
Sports Medicine, Knee, Shoulder and Elbow Surgery
203-407-3518

Total Shoulder Replacement / Hemiarthroplasty

Prior to Surgery

We require pre-admission testing by your family physician within 30 days prior to surgery. We must have the results in our office at a minimum 10 business days before surgery. Fax number 203-407-3558, attention Regina.

On the day prior to surgery, the Hospital will contact you to let you know the arrival time for your surgery. This may be several hours prior to surgery, in order to admit you, the hospital will shave your shoulder before surgery, etc.

Bring a book or something to entertain yourself with while you wait as it may be a long wait.

****Please do not shave your shoulder or armpit, as this may increase bacterial growth on your skin.****

Day of Surgery

It is a good idea to wear a loose, button-down shirt to the hospital. Your family may wait with you until you are taken to the holding area. I will see you prior to the procedure, answer any questions, and place my initials on the correct shoulder.

I will find your family members / friends in the waiting room after surgery. They will be able to see you there within one hour of the surgery in most cases.

After Surgery

In the operating room, your shoulder will be lightly bandaged and a sling will be applied. You will remain in the hospital for one night. You may be discharged when your pain is adequately managed with oral medications and your laboratory values are stable. Please set up P.T. at STAR Physical Therapy to begin in about 4 - 7 days after surgery. If no STAR office is convenient, check with your insurance provider for other facilities that are covered. You will be going to physical therapy 3 times per week for 3-5 months after your surgery.

It is important for you to also be doing your exercises on your own to help regain the range of motion of your shoulder. You should begin range of motion exercises for the elbow immediately after surgery. If I have to reattach (tenodesis) the biceps tendon, you should use your other arm to bend and straighten the operated arm's elbow after the surgery for 6 weeks.

My assistant Regina will usually make your post-operative appointment for you at your appointment before the surgery. If you are unsure about this, please call. I like to see you 10-14 days after surgery in the office.

At Home

You may change the dressing two days after your surgery. Please do not use any ointments or creams on the incision. You should cover the incision with plastic wrap and tape when you shower until you are seen in our office for your post-operative check.

You will be using your sling with the waist-strap for 6 weeks after surgery. You may remove it to perform exercises. Try to do your exercises 3-5 times a day.

Exercises: You should bend and straighten your elbow 10 times, 3 times a day. You may begin gentle "pendulum" exercises where you bend forward at the waist and let your arm fall forward toward the floor. By moving your body slightly, your arm should make small circles (12 inch diameter) clockwise and counter-clockwise, with your palm facing forward and with it facing backward. Do this gently! Spend 5 minutes, 4 times a day doing this.

PENDULUM EXERCISES



Try to use ice or the ice packs as much as possible, especially after the exercises. You may be more comfortable sleeping in a recliner or with pillows propping you up in your bed.

Do not attempt to lift the arm on your own or to push off with your elbow for the first 6 weeks. The rotator cuff in the front of your shoulder that has been cut and repaired to allow access to your shoulder joint must heal! It takes 6 months for the rotator cuff to fully heal after surgery. A six weeks, you may stop wearing your sling, but no lifting of anything but your arm. At three months after surgery, you may lift up to 5 pounds. At six months, you may lift heavier objects, however, lifting over 25 lbs. is not recommended.

Miscellaneous Information

It is normal to have increased swelling and some bruising on days 1-3 compared to the day of the surgery. The swelling is decreased by using the ice. It is normal for the hand to swell as well during the first 1-2 weeks; however it should decrease with elevation. If it continues to be very swollen this can indicate a blood clot and you should contact my office. Please feel free to call our office with any questions or concerns.

Expectations

The main goal of shoulder replacement surgery is decreased shoulder pain. Most patients benefit from improved function as well. Range of motion will typically improve, but will never be normal. It will take over one year to reach your maximum level of improvement.

For the rest of your life, you are required to take antibiotics before dental cleanings and procedures, colonoscopies, or gynecologic procedures.