



Dr. Nuelle Total/Partial Shoulder Replacement: Discharge Care Instructions

Recovering at Home

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how to care for your shoulder at home. These recommendations are designed to help your recovery process, but each person may recover at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.



Wound Care

- **Keep your surgical dressing on until post-operative Day 4.** Remove your dressing on Day 4, but please do not cut any visible sutures or remove the white adhesive skin tapes (steri-strips or butterfly strips) over the wound.
 - After dressing is removed, if wound is continuously draining please call your doctor.
 - After you remove your bandages, you may apply Band-Aids to the wounds daily for comfort. Please **do not use any ointments** under the bandage.
- **Keep the incisions clean and dry until post-operative Day 4. Do NOT soak the shoulder in water or go swimming** until cleared by your doctor. You may shower on post-operative Day 4 (see Activities of Daily Living below).

Pain Management

- Medications
 - We suggest you use the pain medication the first night prior to going to bed. This is to ease any pain when the nerve block wears off.
 - You should eat something when you take pain medication to avoid an upset stomach. Only take narcotics as prescribed as needed. Plan to gradually reduce your narcotic use over the coming weeks.
 - **DO NOT** use anti-inflammatory medication (Aleve, Motrin, Naproxen, etc...).
 - Pain medication may make you constipated. Please try the following solutions in this order. If these do not work, please call the physician's office.
 - A. Decrease the amount of pain medication if your pain has improved.
 - B. Drink more decaffeinated fluids, including water.

- C. Walk as much as tolerated.
- D. Eat foods high in fiber (fruit, prunes, etc...).
- E. Take stool softeners as prescribed while taking narcotic pain medication.

Important information about prescription refills: Notify us early if you need a refill. It may take up to 24 hours for your call to be returned. If you call after 5 pm on Friday, do not expect a call back until Monday morning. Leave the name and phone number of the pharmacy you use. The nurse will call you to ask you to rate your pain and to tell us what you have tried for your pain. **The nurse will need to speak to you, not a family member or friend, as it is not possible to properly assess pain through someone else.**

****Pain medications cannot be refilled on nights and weekends****

- Ice Therapy - Use the ice machine or ice packs (with a thin towel between skin and ice pack) continuously on post-operative Day 0 and Day 1. Beginning on Day 2, you may use ice for 20 minutes every hour for pain relief.
- Sling – Wear your sling at all times, except for hygiene purposes, until your doctor instructs you to remove it.

Activities of Daily Living

- **Diet**
 - Return to your normal diet.
- **Bathing**
 - You may shower on post-op day 4. You should remove the sling and bandages before showering, allowing your arm to relax by your side. You may let warm soapy water flow over the wound but do not scrub the wound. Gently pat the wound area dry with a clean towel.
- **Exercise**
 - Please perform the exercises on the attached “Home Exercise Program,” by post-operative Day 2. Do these exercises 5-6 times daily. Keep your shoulder and arm relaxed at all times.
- **Lifting**
 - Do not lift or hold items heavier than 1 pound in your operative arm. Limit yourself to holding only light items, such as a phone, toothbrush or remote control.
 - After sling is removed, can perform light daily tasks (i.e. reading a newspaper, cutting food, dressing yourself). Keep your elbows at your sides. **DO NOT** reach with operative arm.
- **Driving**
 - Do NOT drive until you are cleared by your physician.
- **Work/School**
 - You may return to light desk work or school within the first week after surgery. Any activity level high than the above must be cleared by your physician.

Physician Follow-Up (Post-Operative Day 10-14)

- Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.
- Your Physician will discuss your surgery, show photographs of your surgery, and outline your rehabilitation at your first follow-up appointment.
- Be sure to make and go to all appointments listed on your discharge paperwork. Call your health care team if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to bring a list of the medicines you take to each visit.
- Our office contact information is as follows:
 - Our office line: 210-804-5995
 - TSAOG main line: 210-804-5400

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now if you experience any of the following:

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C) or chills
- Redness or drainage from the surgical incision site after post-operative Day 4.

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not have a bowel movement within 2 days after taking a laxative.
- You do not get better as expected.

