

Shoulder Surgery

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You are having surgery on your shoulder.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

Pain Relief

- When lying in bed, support your shoulder and arm with one or two pillows. You may also sleep in a recliner for extra comfort.

- You may put a washcloth or handkerchief under the shoulder strap of the sling to protect your neck. You may also put the sling over the collar of your shirt.
- Use a cold pack for pain relief.
 - Place a clean, dry towel on your shoulder.
 - Put the cold pack on the towel.
 - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes at a time.
 - Apply the ice pack as needed.
- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Activity

- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to drive, return to work, exercise, lift and have sex.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for when to wear a sling or shoulder immobilizer.
- Resume your normal activities. Follow your health care provider's directions.
- Do not sleep on your surgery arm.
- Do any exercises given to you by your health care provider.
- Do not lie flat in bed.
- Be out of bed as you are able.
- Get regular activity. Try to walk for a total of 30 minutes a day.

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- Start by walking for 5 to 10 minutes at one time and slowly build to walking 30 minutes.
- Walk often. Try to walk at least 4 to 5 times a day.
- Walk more as you are able.
- Avoid contact sports or any lifting until your health care provider says it's OK.
- You may take a shower or tub bath but do not soak your incision.
 - Cover the incision site with a plastic covering so the site does not get wet. (Remove the covering after the shower.)
 - Try to keep your elbow close to your chest. Be careful not to fall.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for cleaning your underarms.
 - With your sling removed, lean forward and let your arm hang straight down.
 - Wash your underarm by gently passing a washcloth from the front to the back. Dry in the same manner.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Incision Care

- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. They will fall off as your incision heals and do not need to be replaced.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- If your wound has staples, they will be removed at your follow-up visit.
- Do not use lotions, creams, ointments, gels or powders on your incision site.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Include high-fiber foods to prevent constipation.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- you have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- your hand:
 - becomes dusky-colored (bluish purple)
 - is hot or cold to the touch
 - becomes numb, tingles or swells
 - has a foul-smelling odor
- you have new pain or pain you can't control
- you have red bloody drainage that soaks the dressing, cast or both
- you have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- you are unable to get out of bed
- you have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- you have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.