



Patient Guide to Shoulder Replacement

Thank you for choosing Concord Orthopaedics for your shoulder replacement surgery! We are happy to be a part of your journey. After reading this information, please reflect on ways that we can help you achieve your goals. Whether your goal is to play a sport, travel, or just be out of pain, we are committed to serving you. You will meet many people along the way, but it is important to remember that YOU are the most important member of this team. Please feel free to reach out to us any time. We are always here for you!

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This Guide is designed to give you the important information you need to achieve the best outcome from your shoulder replacement surgery, including:

- How to prepare for your upcoming total joint replacement surgery.
- What to expect before, during, and after surgery.
- What to expect and what to do to continue your successful recovery at home.

Your Care Team

Orthopaedic Surgeon: Your orthopaedic surgeon will perform your surgery and will oversee your care throughout your recovery.

Physician Assistant (PA): Your PA will assist your surgeon in the office and hospital.

Primary Care Provider: Your primary care provider (PCP) manages your general health and wellness. Your surgeon will keep in contact with your PCP before and after your procedure.

Patient Care Coordinator: Your patient care coordinator will receive your calls before and after surgery. They can help with medication refills, scheduling, or any communication needed to your surgeon.

Surgical Scheduler: Your surgical scheduler will coordinate your preoperative appointments and your surgical booking. They will facilitate communication between all care providers before surgery.

Anesthesiologist and Nurse Anesthetist: Your anesthesia provider will manage medication to keep you comfortable during surgery, and directly afterward.

Registered Nurse: The Registered Nurse will care for you during your hospital stay. They provide assessment, delivery of treatment, and education.

Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA): Your Licensed Nursing Assistant will assist you in activities like bathing, dressing, or getting to the bathroom.

Physical Therapist (PT): Your physical therapist will show you how to gain strength and mobility after your shoulder replacement.

Occupational Therapist (OT): You may have treatment from an occupational therapist to teach you how to perform activities of daily living like showering and dressing.

Transition Planning Team: You may be assisted by a care manager or social worker to plan your transition from the hospital to home.

Preparing for Surgery

Preoperative Class: Your surgical scheduler may offer you a preoperative class at Concord Hospital. This class can provide valuable information on your hospitalization and recovery.

Presurgical Assessment and Testing: Your surgical scheduler will give you an appointment at presurgical testing to be completed through Concord Hospital. This appointment can take 1-2 hours depending on your medical history. A clinician will assess you, including lab tests to evaluate your overall health. This information will then be communicated to your surgeon.

Medication Management: We will advise you on which medications to stop prior to surgery, and when. Certain vitamins/supplements (e.g. fish oil, vitamin E), anti-inflammatory (e.g. Advil, Motrin, Aleve), and anticoagulant (e.g. Eliquis, Plavix, Coumadin) medications must be stopped prior to surgery. If needed, we will make arrangements for you to discuss these recommendations with the medical doctor that has prescribed these medications for you. We will tell you if and when you should stop your rheumatoid arthritis medications.

You will be given additional information on when to hold medications for diabetes and high blood pressure (for example) at your pre-surgical testing appointment. If you are ever unsure about if and when to stop a medication, call Concord Orthopaedics for clarification.

Medical Clearance: If needed, your surgical scheduler will arrange an appointment with your primary care provider. It is important that your primary care doctor communicates recommendations to your surgeon about your specific medical conditions and how the rest of the team can best care for you. You may also be asked to see a specialist, like a cardiologist, depending on your medical history.

Preventing Infection:

- **Dental Health:** Any dental work should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to surgery. If you have unplanned dental work within this period, please notify us.
- **Shaving:** Do not shave your chest or armpit within 48 hours of surgery. Shaving can cause microscopic openings in the skin that can become pathways for bacteria.
- **Hand Washing:** You and your family are encouraged to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer and practice frequent hand washing.
- **Illness:** If you are ill with a fever, sore throat, flu, or any other illness the week before surgery, please notify your surgeon.
- **Skin and Nails:** If you notice any broken skin, rashes, sunburns, or other skin abnormalities on the affected arm, please notify your surgeon. Nail polish and acrylic nails must be removed prior to surgery.
- It is important to prepare your skin before surgery to reduce your risk of infection. You will receive a separate set of printed instructions on this.

Preparing the Home:

- Have a nonslip bathmat inside the tub or shower.
- Remove anything that may be a tripping hazard, like loose scatter rugs, cords, etc.

- Put a nightlight in the hallway to your bathroom.
- Ensure that frequently used items are within reach (counter height to avoid reaching).
- Make sure you have a cordless or cell phone that can go with you everywhere easily.
- Make sure pets are cared for.
- Find a comfortable chair to use after surgery. Many patients choose to sleep in a recliner. If you do not have one, it is not mandatory, but you could consider borrowing or renting one.
- Prepare meals in advance, so that you do not have to cook when you first arrive home. It can be helpful to freeze meals ahead of time or to have healthy options available.
- Make sure that a friend or family member can stay with you for a few days after your procedure, if you live alone. You will be able to perform your own personal hygiene, but you will need support with cooking, dressing, sling use, and making sure that your medication is taken on schedule.

What to Bring:

- Loose fitting clothes, including pants with an elastic waist, and a large shirt or sweatshirt than can zip or button in the front (not pull over your head).
- Comfortable shoes.
- CPAP machine and/or rescue inhalers, if you use these.
- All jewelry, rings, valuables, should be removed and left at home, including wedding bands.

Your Surgery

Arrival: At your pre-surgical testing appointment, you will receive an arrival time for surgery, and instructions on medications, food, drink, etc. If there are any changes, you will receive a call on the afternoon prior to your procedure. Please keep your phone available! You will need to shower on the night prior to surgery AND morning of surgery with a solution to help limit the risk of infection (refer to the instructions that were provided on this).

Occasionally, we are “running early” and may ask you to come in sooner. Make sure that you are available to answer your phone on the day of your procedure in case we need to reach you.

AMU: After you are admitted to the AMU (admitting unit), your nurse will perform an assessment, and review your medical history and medication use. You will have an IV placed in your arm, and you will meet the anesthesiologist to discuss their plan of care. This will likely include the option of a nerve block, which they will explain in more detail. Your family can stay with you in the AMU until it is time for your procedure. Your surgeon will meet you, answer any remaining questions, and place their initials on the surgical arm to confirm the appropriate site of surgery.

OR: You will be taken into the operating room by a nurse. The OR can be chilly, and the bed will seem uncomfortable; we will make sure to safely position you, and keep you warm and comfortable for your procedure! Your surgeon will call and/or visit with your designated family member or friend after your procedure.

PACU: After your procedure, you'll be taken to the PACU (post-anesthesia unit) for recovery and monitoring. Once you are comfortable and your nurse determines that it is appropriate, your family member can be invited in for a brief visit. You may spend 1-2 hours in PACU.

Surgical Floor: After your immediate recovery in PACU, you'll be taken to the surgical floor to get settled in. You'll meet your nurse, LNA, and several other members of your care team. You'll have plenty of opportunity to rest, but will also be checked frequently to assess your comfort and vital signs. Overnight, your pain, and nausea (if present), will be appropriately managed by your nurse, based on orders placed by your physician. You will be able to start eating solid foods once your nurse determines that you are ready to do so. You will be encouraged to sit in a chair, and do some walking with assistance, as soon as you are comfortable enough for this.

On the morning *after* your procedure, your surgeon will visit on "rounds" to assess your progress and talk about your discharge plan. You'll also meet with physical and occupational therapy to educate you on protecting your new shoulder, review your exercises, and determine whether you can safely be discharged. Most patients require just *one night* in the hospital following this procedure. If you have specific needs or a more complicated medical history, you may require a longer period of time in the hospital. This will be discussed with your surgeon both before and after your procedure.

Recovery

Readiness for Discharge: Your discharge plan will be discussed with your surgeon on the morning after your procedure. We will assess your progress and make recommendations, in conjunction with the physical and occupational therapists who will also be evaluating your mobility and safety.

The Drive Home: A friend or family member will drive you home. If you have a longer drive home, get out and walk for 10-15 minutes every 1-2 hours to help prevent blood clots.

Comfort: Although pain is expected during your recovery, it is important to stay as comfortable as possible. Before discharge, you will be given prescriptions for pain medications. You will also be using some over-the-counter medications, which will be listed in

your discharge paperwork. Some pain medications have side effects like constipation and disrupted sleep. Constipation can be prevented with increased hydration, over-the-counter medications, and dietary fiber. Remember that using ice can provide significant comfort! Make sure to have ice packs ready for when you return home.

Sling: You will be in a sling for approximately 6 weeks after your surgery. While you are in the hospital, your physical therapist will educate you on how to properly wear this, and take the sling on/off. You **WILL** need to sleep with the sling on, and use it for all daytime activities, but can remove it for bathing, showering, dressing, and exercises.

Activity: It is important to continue your exercise program after surgery. You will go home with a plan for either home or outpatient physical therapy. Your long-term outcomes are dependent on **YOU** maintaining this program! You may resume low impact activities like walking outdoors as soon as you are feeling strong enough.

Swelling: It is normal to experience some swelling and bruising around your incision. Cold packs are helpful to reduce this during the first week, and may continue to help with comfort after that. Mild to moderate swelling in the wrist and hand of the operative arm are also common.

Incision Care: Your incision should remain covered with a bandage for two weeks after surgery. The bandage that we provide is waterproof and should remain tightly sealed. You will be able to shower as soon as you'd like with the dressing in place. You will receive instructions on when and how to change the dressing during your hospitalization.

Showering: You may shower as soon as you are strong enough to do so. Many patients will choose to take a shower in the hospital before they are discharged, with the help of a nursing assistant (LNA). During the first two weeks, you can shower and allow the water to wash over your waterproof bandage without soaking it. Once the bandage is removed, you can gently wash the area with a mild soap and pat dry with a clean towel.

Diet: A healthy balanced diet will be very important to your recovery. It is normal to have a decreased appetite after surgery, so you will need to focus on ensuring that you have the proper nutrition and hydration. Make sure to include plenty of protein, iron, calcium, and Vitamin D!

It is important to drink at least 8-10 cups of water a day. Staying hydrated and eating high-fiber foods will help with constipation. Although supplements to your diet may be useful, you should be focused on simply eating a healthy, nutritious, and balanced diet. We discourage alcohol use until all of you have been able to stop all prescribed medications from surgery.

Smoking: As discussed before surgery, remember the importance of **NOT SMOKING!**

Rest: You will feel very fatigued after surgery. It is normal to take naps during the day and to

have less energy for several weeks after surgery. You might also notice that your sleep at night is disrupted. This is very common after shoulder surgery, and usually improves within 4-6 weeks.

Exercise and Activity: It is important to with continue exercise and activity. After surgery, you can start light exercise like walking outdoors or using a recumbent exercise bike as soon as you feel ready. Heavier exercise should be discussed with your provider first. Sexual activity can resume when you feel ready.

Dental Care: It is important that you notify your dentist of your shoulder replacement. All elective dental work should be postponed for 6 months following surgery. You will need to take antibiotics prior to any dental work to prevent infection. You have been provided with a letter to give to your dentist, outlining the recommended antibiotics. Likewise, please notify your surgeon of any invasive tests, procedures, or surgeries, in case an antibiotic is needed.

Follow Up Care: You will need to follow up with your surgeon or physician assistant at regular intervals following surgery. Your first visit will be 1-2 weeks after your procedure.

Travel: You are discouraged from traveling long distances for the first several weeks after surgery. If you must complete emergency travel during this time, please discuss this in advance with your surgeon. You will likely set off metal detectors at the airport. There is no “card” or note issued after surgery; you can simply explain to the security screeners that you have a joint replacement.

Driving: We discourage driving for a minimum of 4-6 weeks following surgery, while you are immobilized in your sling. Plan on having a ride available for physical therapy appointments, grocery shopping, and routine errands.

Returning to Work: Your surgeon will let you know when they anticipate that you may be able to return to work. Because different jobs require different physical activity, you and your surgeon will decide what is best for you. If your job requires any paperwork (e.g. FMLA) please mail this or drop it off at our office to be completed.

Important Phone Numbers

Concord Orthopaedics: (603) 224-3368

Concord Hospital: (603) 225-2711

www.concordortho.com

<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/shoulder-joint-replacement/>

Thank you, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions!