



Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division

Christopher Klifto, MD & Alix Ackerman NP-C

3609 SW Durham Dr, Durham, NC 27707

Discharge Instructions after Total Shoulder Arthroplasty or reverse Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (shoulder replacement)

Dressings:

- A sling has been provided for you. Remain in your sling at all times. This includes sleeping in the sling. The sling may be removed for dressing and showering when cleared by physician.
- We placed a water tight dressing that we put on in the operating room. Leave the dressing in place for 1 week. The dressing adhesive is heat activated and will be very sticky when removing. There may be sutures or staples in place on the skin at your incision. We will remove these at your 2 week post-operative appointment.

Pain Management/Medications:

- Use ice (polar care unit) on the shoulder intermittently over the first 48 hours after surgery and as needed thereafter. To save on ice, you can use small water bottles (8-12 ounces) and freeze them. This allows you to use 3-4 bottles in the polar care and have some continuing to freeze in the freezer that can be reused after they thaw.
- Please resume all normal medications the day after surgery unless otherwise instructed.
- Please take a baby Aspirin (81mg) twice a day for 4 weeks to help prevent blood clot formation. If you take other blood thinners or are unable to take aspirin, please let us know.
- Pain medicine has been prescribed for you. Use your medication liberally as directed over the first 48 hours, and then begin to taper your use.
- No driving or drinking alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication
- You may take Extra Strength Tylenol or Tylenol in place or in conjunction with you prescribed pain medication. Do not exceed 4,000mg Tylenol per day (including Tylenol in certain prescribed pain medications like Percocet or Norco)

Activity:

- Avoid weight bearing with the operative upper extremity until your follow-up appointment. Do not push or pull with that arm. Do not lean on operative side through hand or elbow.
- No lifting greater than 1 pound: a cell phone, a small drink, or items of equivalent weight
- To prevent hand swelling: Move your fingers, squeeze stress ball, keep your hand elevated above your elbow, and keep your elbow above your heart
- Showering: sling may be removed, but keep arm at side. To wash operative armpit, lean forward and/or toward operative side so your arm passively moves away from the body. DO NOT raise your arm actively!

Contact:

- Contact the office or emergency on-call resident if you notice any of the following:
 - Excessive redness or warmth of the incisions
 - Drainage for more than 4 days after surgery
 - Fever of more than 101.5 F
 - Worsening numbness of the hand
 - Pain, redness, and swelling in your leg



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-Go directly to the closest Emergency Room if you develop chest pain, difficulty breathing, or any complications that require immediate attention.

Follow-up:

You should have a post-operative appointment about 14 days after your surgery. A post-op appointment should already be scheduled for you. If you do not have an appointment in 2 weeks or if you need to change the appointment, please call 919-471-9622.