

- **Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking opioid pain medications.** You should also avoid tasks that require judgment, coordination, or short-term memory (such as childcare, operating heavy machinery, making legal/financial decisions, etc.).



When can I return to full activity?

- You may be able to return to work as early as 2-3 weeks after surgery, based on the physical requirements of your job.
- If you participate in sports or strenuous physical exercise, you should anticipate 3 months before being released to “full duty.”
- Most people who have this surgery feel “fully recovered” after 1 year.

What will be different after having a joint replacement?

- **Improved pain:** 90-95% of people who undergo a total joint replacement report feeling significantly better than before surgery once they have completely healed.
- **Antibiotic prophylaxis:** For a minimum of 2 years after surgery, ask your dentist, doctor, or surgeon about whether you should have antibiotics before undergoing any dental procedures (including routine dental cleanings) or colonoscopies. For major invasive dental procedures (such as root canals, implant placements, etc.),

you may need to receive prophylactic antibiotics for the rest of your life. It is sometimes possible for bacteria to travel through the blood stream, so it may be recommended that you take antibiotics prior to procedures that could transmit infection to your joint.

When do I start physical therapy?

- You should begin physical therapy approximately two weeks after surgery (unless otherwise advised by your surgeon). This is key to your recovery!



When do I need to follow-up after surgery?

- **Schedule a follow-up appointment with your surgeon for 10-14 days after surgery.**
- If you have any questions or concerns during that time, call Fremont Orthopaedics at (307) 332-9720 Option 2.
- For medical emergencies, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

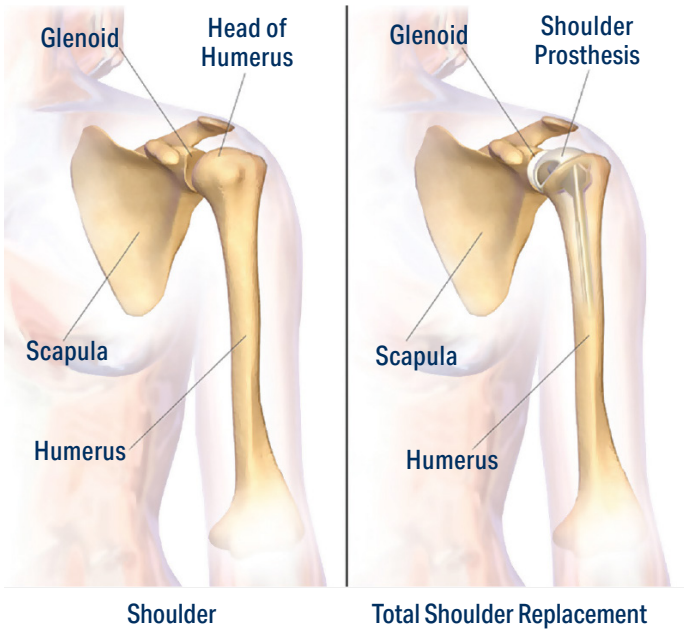
WHEN TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION:



- If the patient becomes unresponsive, is extremely difficult to awaken, or has difficulty breathing
- If dark red blood fully saturates the dressing after surgery
- If drainage from the surgical incisions is creamy, yellow/green, or has a foul odor
- If you develop numbness or signs of poor circulation (blue/grey color or icy cold temperature) in your operative limb and these symptoms are not better after loosening your brace/dressing and changing positions
- If you experience severe nausea and vomiting and are unable to keep fluids down, fail to urinate for more than 8 hours, or experience dizziness or fainting
- If you develop a fever greater than 101.5°F
- If you develop severe tenderness or swelling in the middle of your calf
- If your pain cannot be controlled with the maximum amount of pain medication prescribed to you



Shoulder Replacement Postoperative Instructions



the bones in the shoulder joint are removed during surgery, which allows the implants to fit properly. The muscles and ligaments that surround your shoulder joint remain in place, allowing your shoulder to maintain movement and stability after surgery.

You received general anesthesia during surgery, during which you were constantly monitored by an anesthesiologist or anesthetist. This type of anesthesia involves both sedation and pain management for the duration of your surgery.

When will I go home following surgery?

- Some patients spend 1 night in the hospital after a total joint replacement. It is possible that your surgeon will recommend that you stay longer, depending on your health and status after surgery.
- Others may be discharged home once they are able to mobilize safely, eat and drink and pain is controlled, with close follow up from the home health and physical therapy team.
- During this time you will have the opportunity to work closely with your surgical team, as well as physical therapists and other healthcare professionals, to help you begin the healing process in a safe environment.
- You will be discharged once you have had some time to adjust to your new joint, and are able to move around more easily.
- It is important for you to have an adult caregiver available when you return home, as you will need help with daily activities, such as cooking, eating, and dressing.

Information about your surgery

A shoulder arthroplasty (replacement) involves replacing the damaged surfaces of the shoulder joint with implants that are made of metal and plastic. The implants are sized specifically to fit your body, and are press fit or “glued” into place using surgical cement. The damaged portions of

SUMMARY OF KEY ITEMS FOR YOUR RECOVERY:



- Perform exercises 3 times per day, starting the day after surgery.
- Apply cold therapy to your operative site 5-6 times per day.
- Begin physical therapy two weeks after surgery.
- Use your sling as directed and follow activity guidelines, as outlined below.

How can I make my home a safe place to recover?

- The following recommendations are aimed to increase your comfort and safety.
~ **Clear walkways:** To help you move around your home safely, we recommend that you move any potential tripping hazards (such as throw rugs, boxes, electrical cords, etc.) before surgery.
~ **Pets:** If you have pets in your home, you should take precautions not to trip on them or have them jump up on you. It is best to have someone available to care for them and/or take them outside until you have regained adequate mobility.
~ **Access to items:** If there are items that you use frequently that are stored in difficult-to-access areas (such as under the bed, on a high shelf, etc.), we recommend moving these items to an accessible location before surgery.

What should I eat and drink after surgery?

- You may eat and drink what you feel like after your surgery, but it is very important to stay hydrated, so you should consciously increase your water intake.
- Some patients experience nausea after surgery, so we recommend that you start with light foods such as soup, toast, crackers, water, or juice. If you are tolerating these foods, you may progress to a regular diet.
- Opioid pain medications often cause constipation, so eating a high fiber diet may help you to avoid this side effect.

How do I take care of my dressing?

- Your dressing is intended to keep your surgical incision clean, dry, and covered until your first post-operative appointment. To ensure this, we recommend that you follow the instructions that are detailed below.
- The dressing placed on your shoulder in the operating room consists of surgical glue and a clear adhesive dressing.
- A small amount of drainage from your wound may be visible after surgery. It is normal for this drainage to appear blood-tinged, clear pink, or reddish.

Dressing Change Instructions

- The clear adhesive dressing should remain on your shoulder until your first follow-up appointment with your surgeon.
- No other changes to your dressing will be necessary until after your first follow-up appointment.

Bathing After Surgery

- **You may shower any time after surgery. Do not remove the clear adhesive dressing when you shower.** Do not swim or submerge your operative site in a bathtub, hot tub, or hot spring until cleared by your surgeon.
- After the clear adhesive dressing has been removed by your surgeon, you may shower without covering your incision. To wash your

operative site, simply allow soapy water to run over the incisions. You may gently wash around your incisions, but do not vigorously scrub your incision sites.

- After washing, gently pat to dry your incisions with a clean towel. Once dry, you may apply clean, dry dressings (as described above).

What activities and exercises can I do?

- Minimize activity for the first couple of days after your surgery. You will likely need assistance from an adult caregiver for the majority of the first week after surgery.
- **Do not reach overhead, rotate your shoulder away from your body, lift or carry items with your operative arm** for the entire time that you are required to wear a sling. Your surgeon will inform you when you may begin doing these activities, likely 6-12 weeks after surgery.
- When resting on the bed or couch, you will likely find it most comfortable to support your operative arm with a pillow.
- Apply ice to your shoulder for 30-40 minutes 5-6 times a day for the first three days after surgery. You should keep applying ice 3 times a day for 2 more weeks.
- Never apply ice directly to bare skin. Do not use heat on your shoulder.
- You will begin a comprehensive physical therapy program, in addition to home exercises, as directed by your surgeon.

Exercise Instructions

It is very important for you to begin doing the indicated exercises the day after surgery, and to perform the exercises 3 times a day to maintain strength and mobility.

- Active exercises: These exercises use the muscles of your operative arm.
~ Hand and wrist movement: With your arm in your sling or at your side, move your wrist in circles (both clockwise and counterclockwise) for two minutes. Make a fist and then spread your fingers wide for two minutes. Do not move your shoulder while you do this exercise.
~ Elbow movement: With your arm at your side, straighten and bend your elbow 15-20 times. Do not move your shoulder while you do this exercise.
~ Shoulder blade pinches: Pinch your shoulder blades together for 5-10 seconds at a time. Repeat for 5 minutes.



- Passive exercises: These exercises are performed without using the muscles in your operative arm/shoulder. Instead, you use your other arm (or the help of another adult) to move your operative arm.



~ Pendulum exercise: Remove your sling and let your arm hang down while you bend at the waist. Use your body (not your arm) to begin gentle movement in a circle.

~ Supine forward elevation: Lie on your back and lift your operative arm straight up using your other arm. Repeat this 15-20 times.



How do I use my sling?

- **You will wake up after surgery with your operative arm in a sling.** The purpose of the sling is to support the weight of your arm while the repaired structures in your shoulder are healing.
- **Wear your sling for 6 weeks after surgery,** only removing it while doing your exercises or showering. You will need to wear your sling during the day and while sleeping in order to allow your tissues to heal.
- Your elbow should be slid all the way back in the sling pocket. You may adjust the sling position for comfort, as long as your arm is supported and the bend in your elbow is maintained.

What medications can I take?

- **For safety reasons, always take prescription medications as directed** and talk with your surgeon if you think your prescription needs adjustment.
- Patients can typically be managed without intravenous pain meds after joint replacement surgery. There are a variety of options for pain management, such as Tylenol, Gabapentin, Percocet, and anti-inflammatory medications, none of which are required. Your surgeon and care team will work with you to establish a regimen that best meets your needs.
- Once you begin to feel comfortable after surgery, you can decrease your pain medication by taking smaller doses and increasing the time between doses. You may use Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead of your prescription pain medication.
- You will also be taking medications to reduce the risk of blood clot formation for at least one month following surgery.

How to Minimize Blood Clot Risk After Surgery

- In order to reduce your risk of blood clots (also known as “deep vein thrombi” or “DVTs”) after surgery, your surgeon will instruct you to take medications such as aspirin or “blood thinners.”
- Most patients will be instructed to take Aspirin tablets for the first 30 days after surgery. Some patients with additional clotting risk factors may be prescribed “blood thinner” medications to be injected under the skin after surgery.

How to Manage Pain After Surgery

- You will experience some pain following surgery, which is part of the expected healing process. Our goal is to help you maintain a mild level of pain that allows you to go about your daily activities, participate in rehabilitation exercises, and sleep at night.
- For the first several days after surgery, it is helpful to take pain medication at regular intervals to keep pain at a tolerable level. This is more effective than allowing pain to become severe and trying to “chase it” back down to a tolerable level.
- **It is extremely important for you to ice your operative site in order to reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation.**

Precautions with Pain Medications

- **Pain medication should always be taken with food** to avoid an upset stomach. You may split pills in half to take a smaller dose if needed.



- **Nausea and itching may occur with opioid pain medications.** If you experience these side effects, you may want to decrease your dose of pain medication or stop taking it.
- **Constipation is a common side effect of opioid pain medications.** To avoid constipation, increase your fluid and fiber intake, and consider using an over-the-counter stool softener (such as Colace or Docusate).
- **Do not take more than a total of 3 grams (3000 mg) of Tylenol in 24 hours.** Exceeding this limit can be toxic to your liver and is very dangerous. Many pain medications also contain Tylenol (acetaminophen), and it is important that you do not take a combined total of more than 3000 mg of this medication per day.
- **Sedation is a side effect of all opioids.** Patients who become very sleepy while using pain medication should not take another dose until they become alert.