

Shoulder Replacement Discharge Instructions

Congratulations! If you are reading this, either you or a loved one has either had or is going to have a shoulder replacement. Dr. Sciortino has prepared these instructions to help you with your immediate post-operative recovery and hopefully answer any questions that you may have.

Medications

Pain medications. You will be given a prescription for a pain medication, typically hydrocodone with acetaminophen. (Norco, Vicodin). If you are allergic to this medication or have a problem taking it, you might be given a different pain medication. All narcotic pain medications can have side effects which can include nausea and constipation. If you need a refill of your pain medication, you will need to call our office during normal business hours and pick up a hand written and signed prescription. As of October 2014, most narcotic pain medication prescriptions can no longer be called in to a pharmacy.

Celebrex. Most patients will also be given a prescription for Celebrex. This is also used to help with pain. It is a long acting anti-inflammatory and should be taken once per day. It might help your pain so that you do not have to take as many of the narcotic pain medications. Celebrex can be taken even if you are taking anticoagulants. If you cannot get the Celebrex because it is not covered by your insurance or it is too expensive, then it is ok not to take it. However you may need to take more of the other pain medication. There is no other medication that can be used as a substitute for Celebrex.

Anticoagulant. Most patients will be encouraged to take Aspirin 325mg once per day to help prevent blood clots in the veins of the legs.

Other medications. Generally you should resume taking all other medications that you were on prior to surgery, other than aspirin or anti-inflammatories.

Wound care

Dr. Sciortino usually uses dissolving sutures and tissue glue to seal the incision. There are no sutures or staples to be removed. Because of this it is safe to shower when you get home. It is ok to get the incision wet when you shower, but do not soak it in a tub or go swimming for one month. After you shower, dry off the area of the incision and cover it with a clean dry bandage. If there is no drainage for two days in a row, you can leave the incision open to air. The tissue glue will typically begin to flake off at around 2-3 weeks post-op.

Physical therapy

Physical therapy is very important after a shoulder replacement. Physical therapy after you are discharged from the hospital can be done either at your home or as an outpatient. Most patients will go to outpatient physical therapy. Outpatient therapy is where you go to the therapist's office and you can call our office to help set this up. Home therapy is where the therapist comes to your house, and this can be arranged before you leave the hospital. After you have finished with home therapy, you might need to contact our office to arrange outpatient PT.

Return to activity

Your arm will be in a sling after surgery. You will need to wear this most of the time for the first 4 weeks after surgery. You can remove the sling for bathing, skin care and physical therapy. You can also remove it if you are resting or sitting, provided that you do not use your arm for any heavy activity. You should not do any lifting, reaching for, or carrying of any objects for the first 4 weeks after surgery. After the first 4 weeks, you can resume light activity as soon as you feel comfortable. Often patients are able to return to sedentary work within 2 or 3 weeks, as long as they can continue using the sling. Light work is at 4-6 weeks and heavy work at after 12 weeks. These are just guidelines. You can drive at around 3-4 weeks, but you should not be taking any narcotic pain medications if you drive. Most patients are back to most normal activities by 4-6 weeks after surgery.