



Website: [www.suncoastshoulder-elbow.com](http://www.suncoastshoulder-elbow.com)

### **Guide To Your Shoulder Replacement**

#### Day of the surgery

- The surgery will be an inpatient procedure requiring an overnight hospital stay
- A general anesthetic is used for the procedure and you will be asleep for the duration of the surgery
- The day of surgery the anesthesiologist will administer a nerve block that makes the operative arm numb and pain free in the hours following the surgery and typically lasts into the middle of the night after surgery
- The arm will be in a shoulder immobilizer (a type of sling) to protect the arm after surgery
- You will begin taking prescription pain pills the night of the surgery to decrease the pain once the nerve block has worn off. Typically, this requires taking 1-2 pills every 4 hours
- Stronger intravenous pain medicine is available as well to control the pain while in the hospital

### First Post-Operative Day

- The morning after surgery the physical therapists will help you get out of bed and work with you to begin some gentle exercises for the shoulder
- All patients receive intravenous antibiotics for the first post-operative day as this is the standard of care to minimize infections
- The nurses will change your surgical dressing and place a fresh dressing over the incision site
- Most patients pain is controlled in the afternoon of the first post-operative day, and they are able to be discharged to home

### **Option: Second Post-Operative Day**

- If the patient is struggling with physical therapy, or experiencing a greater pain level, most insurance plans do cover the patient to stay until the morning of the second post-operative day if need be.

### Rehab following surgery

#### **Weeks 0-6**

- The day after you get home a health nurse and therapist will come to the house to inspect the arm. They will teach you and observe you doing the basic light exercises Dr. Cuff wants you to start doing
- The shoulder immobilizer is to be removed to do these exercises 3 times a day but should be worn at night and any time you are up and around the house or out in public
- For the first **6 weeks** the arm will be protected in the immobilizer and you will do these light exercises daily on your own and do not need to go to formal outpatient physical therapy
- The key is to keep the arm by the side during these six weeks and you should not do any outstretched reaching or overhead motion with the arm at this point

- Dr Cuff will see you back in the office about 10-12 days after surgery to remove your suture obtain x-rays
- You can begin getting the incision wet after your first post-op visit
- It is okay to drive if you are not taking pain pills and the arm is maintained on the 6 o'clock position on the steering wheel

### **Weeks 6-12**

- Dr. Cuff or his physician assistant will see you again at week 6 after surgery
- The shoulder immobilizer is discontinued at this point
- You will now be able to begin using the arm for light activity and movement but no lifting greater than 5 pounds
- Formal outpatient physical therapy will now begin and you will go 3 times a week to start working on regaining your range of motion
- Following instructions and doing the therapy is an important part of improving the arm after surgery
- No strengthening exercises are to start at this point

### **Weeks 12 and beyond**

- Dr. Cuff sees you again at the 12-week point
- At this point the shoulder should be healed enough to progress to strengthening the shoulder
- The therapist will teach you strengthening exercises for 1-2 weeks and then discharge you with a home strengthening program that you should continue to do for another 8-12 weeks at home on your own
- At the 12-week post-operative point you are clear to return to most of your recreational activities but should avoid heavy overhead lifting until 6 months from surgery

### **Important Points:**

- Every surgery has risks (infection, nerve or blood vessel injury, shoulder stiffness, implant dislocation, fracture around the implant, implant

loosening with time, persistent pain, the risks of anesthesia), however shoulder replacement is a very well-tolerated surgery and in our patients complications have occurred in about 2-3% of our patients

- Even though you are cleared to return to most activity by week 12 it will take several more months to build up the strength in the shoulder
- It is not uncommon to have some soreness while doing activity for many months after the procedure
- In most studies it has been shown that it can take **1 full year** to get your maximum strength and function back after the surgery
- Dr. Cuff continues to follow you after the first 3 months with visits at 6 months and 1-year post op to chart your progress