

# Shoulder Replacement Surgery:

## *Home Instructions*

### Medicine

- **Take your pain medicines exactly as directed by your doctor.** Your pain medicine will help to reduce your pain but won't take it away completely. Never take more medicine than your doctor ordered, even if you have pain. If your pain medicine isn't working, tell your doctor.
- **You may need to take a stool softener or mild laxative to help prevent constipation.**

### Activity

Soon after surgery, your surgeon and physical therapist will give you exercises to help you get back to your daily routine. These exercises will increase your ability to move your arm and increase your strength. It is very important to do these exercises as directed so your shoulder heals well. Here's what you can expect:

- At first, your exercises will be mild and limited to very gentle arm movements.
- As you get stronger, you will start to move the affected arm with the help of your other arm. This will help increase the mobility and range of motion of your new shoulder. These exercises will continue for several weeks.
- You will need to keep your arm in a sling for several weeks and possibly more than a month
- Take several short walks each day to help your body heal.
- You will not be able to drive for approximately 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery. **DO NOT DRIVE when taking opioid pain medicine.** Ask someone to take you to your appointments, if needed.



### *My follow-up appointment*

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Wound care

- **Care for your incision as directed by your doctor.** The incision is usually closed with dissolvable stitches and surgical tape or glue. A light bandage may be placed over the incision. This will likely be removed by your surgeon at your follow-up visit.
- **Apply ice packs to the incision site for 15 minutes at a time, several times a day, to reduce swelling and pain.** Place a towel between the ice and your skin. **Never put ice directly on your skin.**
- **Do not let your incision get wet.** Follow your doctor's instructions on when and how to shower or bathe. You will learn how to do this in the hospital. **Do not go swimming, soak in a hot tub, or soak your incision in water** until your doctor says it's okay.

### Diet

- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes lots of fresh vegetables, fruits, fish, and lean meats. Your body needs good nutrition for healing.
- Drink lots of water. This will help with constipation.
- Avoid beverages with added sugar or alcohol. **Never drink alcohol when taking opioid pain medicines.**



### When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Swelling at the incision site
- Bleeding at the incision site
- Warmth, redness, or tenderness at the incision site that gets worse
- Fever above 101.5 °F (38.5 °C)
- Increased pain, decreased sensation (feeling), cold or blue fingers on your affected arm
- Difficulty breathing



### Questions for my doctor

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