



Getting ready for and recovering from Total Shoulder Arthroplasty (Replacement) Surgery



Island Health Surgery Resources



island health

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Surgical Services, Island Health

About these materials

This booklet was developed with input from doctors and health care providers. It provides specific information to help you prepare for your surgery and recovery.

Please read this booklet as soon as you get it!

If your surgeon or nurse gives you information that is different than what is in this booklet, please follow their directions.

This booklet is meant to be read with the *Getting ready for and recovering from Surgery* booklet; it provides general information to help you prepare for your surgery and recovery. It is important that you read both booklets. You can find copies by:

- Asking your surgeon's office, or
- Going to Island Health's Getting Ready for Surgery website:

www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/surgery/getting-ready-surgery



Help your care team help you!

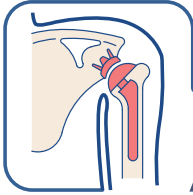
Share this booklet with your care team so they know about your plans to recover and get home as soon as possible.

Please note that the information in this booklet is current as of the date printed on it.

Surgical Services, Island Health



Getting Ready for Surgery



About Your Total Shoulder Surgery

Your expected length of hospital stay is **24 hours**. You may go home earlier or later, depending on your recovery. You will be discharged when your pain is controlled and you can move around on your own, and safely get dressed.

Surgery Information

Total shoulder replacement surgery is done to replace all or part of the shoulder joint (the ball and socket joint, or the *glenohumeral*) and replace it with an artificial (prosthetic) implant.

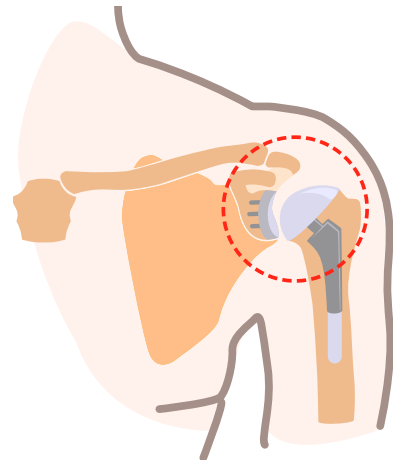
The surgery is done to relieve arthritis pain or to fix a badly damaged shoulder joint.

The goal of the surgery is to make your shoulder more stable, give you back movement in your shoulder, and relieve pain.

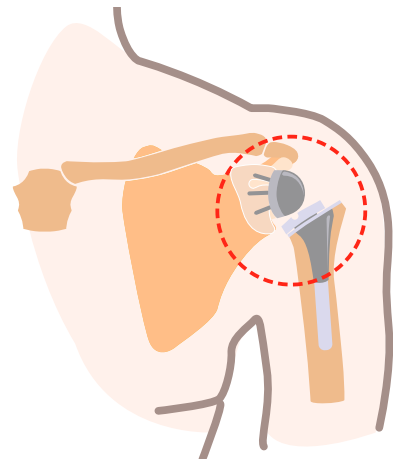
There are 2 types of shoulder replacement surgery:

- Total shoulder replacement
- Reverse total shoulder replacement

Your surgeon will work with you to decide what the best surgery is for you.



Total Shoulder Arthroplasty



Reverse Total Shoulder Arthroplasty

How the Surgery is Done

Both types of surgery are done by the surgeon making one large incision (cut) on the shoulder. They then remove the damaged joint surfaces and replace the joint with a prosthetic implant. If there are any torn tendons, the surgeon will repair them at this time. The prosthetic has a “wear time” of 10-15 years.

Before your surgery, please make sure to:

- Arrange for a ride home from the hospital. Discharge time is between 9:00 and 11:00am.
- Freeze meals that you can heat easily when you get home after surgery (or arrange to have someone bring you meals when you get home).
- Arrange for someone to help with laundry, cleaning and groceries.
- Arrange for someone to help you with dressing for the first 3-7 days after discharge, such as a friend, family member, or private supports.

You may also consider organizing respite for your post-operative recovery.

If your surgeon prescribed you a special sling before your surgery, please bring it with you to the hospital on the day of your surgery.

- Make sure that you have the sling fitted *before* your surgery so it fits properly. They should fit the sling where you purchase it.

Recommended equipment to have at home after your surgery:

- Tub transfer bench.
- Hand-held shower hose.
- Shower chair, if you have a walk-in shower.
- Non-slip mat.
- Long-handled sponge.
- Removable tub clamp OR installed grab bars.
- Raised toilet seat/toilet safety frame.
- Bed assist rail.

You may want to rent or buy an ice machine that circulates cold water, for cold therapy (these are better for you than ice packs because there is little or no condensation, keeping the incision area clean and dry).

What to Expect After Your Surgery

It takes 6-12 months to fully recover. The information below is just an example of what to expect after surgery (your surgeon may want you to start range-of-motion and strengthening exercises earlier, for example). Your physiotherapist will teach you the exercises that your surgeon prescribes.

- **For about the first 6 weeks after surgery** you will wear a sling to protect the repaired tendons and soft tissues around the shoulder.
- **Between 6 and 12 weeks after surgery**, rehabilitation is focused on getting the shoulder to move more normally. You should not lift anything that could pull apart the repaired tissues.
- **Between 3 and 6 months after surgery**, you will advance strengthening exercises, depending on what your surgeon tells you.

When You Wake Up in the Recovery Room



After surgery, you will wake up in the recovery room. You will have a sling on the arm that was operated on, and your arm will be on a pillow. You will also have a large dressing (bandage) over the incision.

The surgeon may put a drain near the incision to remove extra fluid. The drain is kept in place with a stitch and will stay in for 24 hours. The drain will be removed when the drainage is low enough.

You will also have an intravenous (IV) in your arm to make sure your body gets enough fluids; you might be given antibiotics (medicine) through this IV.

After You Get Out of the Recovery Room



After surgery, you will be in the recovery room until you are moved to the ward. Once you have moved to the ward, you will be settled into your room. You will be given pain medication as needed.

The day after surgery, while you are still in the hospital, you will have an X-ray of your shoulder taken.

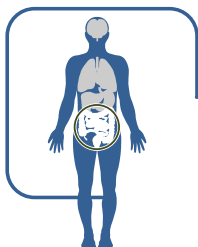
You will start taking medicine in pill form to control your pain. You will be given a prescription for more pain medicine for when you go home.

You will start doing cold therapy while in the hospital. You will apply cold to your incision area for 10 minutes, then take it off for 10 minutes, and then put it on again for 10 minutes. Do this every 2 hours.



Eating and Drinking

After surgery you may feel nauseated (sick to your stomach). This can be because of the anesthetic you are given before surgery. You may not feel like eating right away. When you feel better, you can eat as you normally would.



Going to the Bathroom

Changes in food and activity level can cause constipation (hard bowel movements). As well, most pain pills can cause constipation. Before you are discharged from the hospital, we will teach you about bowel care for when you get home.

There is also information on how to prevent constipation, on page 9 of this booklet.

While you are in the hospital, your occupational therapist/physiotherapist will show you how to clean yourself after bowel movements. This is so you do not hurt the arm that was operated on.



Wounds

Your nurse might change your dressing on the day you are to be discharged from the hospital.

- Your nurse may tell you how to shower safely with the dressing on.
- You will keep the dressing on until your follow-up appointment with the surgeon, 10-14 days after surgery.



Activity

Your arm should always be on a pillow *and* in your sling while you are lying down.

- The sling must stay on at all times, except when you are doing therapy exercises, washing, or dressing.
- The sling must stay on for 4-8 weeks, unless your surgeon tells you something different.

While in the hospital, your physiotherapist will show you how to do:

- Daily exercises for you neck, elbow, wrist and fingers, to help you maintain movement.
- Assisted shoulder exercises.

Reminder: Always put a pillow under your surgical limb when lying down or sitting up!

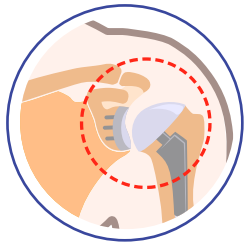


What Not To Do

- **Do not** use your surgical arm to lift, push or pull anything.
- **Do not** put any weight on your surgical arm (such as leaning on it) for 6-8 weeks.



PRECAUTIONS

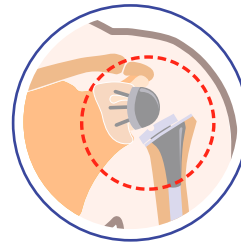


Total Shoulder Replacement Surgery

If you had total shoulder replacement surgery:

- **Do not** move the hand/arm on your surgical side behind your back, like reaching for your wallet in your back pocket.
- **Do not** move your surgical arm quickly or suddenly.
- **Do not** move your surgical arm sideways, away from your body, like thumbing a ride.

Your physiotherapist will review these movements with you. If you are not sure, please ask!



Reverse Total Shoulder Surgery

If you had reverse total shoulder surgery:

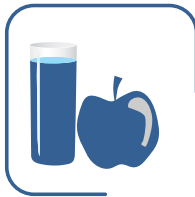
- **Do not** move your surgery arm behind your back. You should always be able to see the elbow of your surgical arm.
 - For example, do not make motions similar to reaching into your back pocket.
 - Follow the instructions the occupational therapist/physiotherapist gave you to clean yourself after bowel movements.

Your physiotherapist will review these movements with you. If you are not sure, please ask!



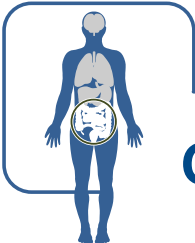


Going Home After Surgery



Eating and Drinking

You can start eating normally as soon as you want to. To heal, it is important to eat a well-balanced diet and drink at least 6 to 8 cups (1.5 to 2L) of water every day.



Going to the Bathroom

Changes in medications, activity and diet can cause constipation (hard, dry bowel movements).

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses (1.5 to 2L) of water every day.
- Include fruits, vegetables, dried peas, beans, lentils and whole grains in your diet every day. These foods are high in fibre.
- Take a walk every day, as soon as you have the energy, to stay active.
- Take a stool softener or laxative if needed. Ask your surgeon or pharmacist to suggest one.



Wounds

Leave your dressing in place until your follow-up appointment, 10-14 days after surgery.

- Please do **NOT** change your dressing unless it gets wet or soiled.



Activity

Wear your sling at all times *except* when you are doing your therapy exercises, washing, or dressing. Keep the sling on for 6 weeks, or until your surgeon tells you to take it off.

- Follow the instructions for putting on and removing the sling.
- Gradually start doing your normal activities, like walking. It is normal to feel weak and tired for a couple of weeks after surgery.
- Your surgeon will give you a prescription for physiotherapy, and will tell you when you should begin. Your physiotherapist will give you exercises to do. It is important to do the exercises the way your physiotherapist teaches you to do them.
- You can use a cane on the non-operative side, for stability.



Pain

Your shoulder will hurt after surgery, and may be very painful for the first few days. You will likely be prescribed a narcotic such as Dilaudid (hydromorphone), oxycodone, or tramacet. You may also be prescribed non-narcotic pain medications.

The pain will gradually get better, and there are things you can do to help:

- Fill the prescription(s) that you are prescribed, on the way home from the hospital, or send a friend or family member to fill it as soon as you get home.
- In the first day or two after the surgery, take the pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon (for example: every 4 to 6 hours). Do not wait until the pain is bad!
- Gradually reduce your pain medication use as your pain decreases.



Sleeping

Many patients find that they cannot sleep in their usual position after surgery.

- Most patients are more comfortable if they sleep sitting up for the first few weeks after surgery.
- Some people find it most comfortable to create a “nest of pillows,” or to use a support (or wedge) pillow in bed. You may also find that sleeping in a recliner chair works best for you.



Swelling

You may have some swelling or bruising on the front of the chest muscles or down the arm to the hand. This is normal and might last a few weeks.

- Remember to always put a pillow under your arm when sitting or lying down.



Icing

You can apply *gel* ice packs or bags of frozen vegetables as cold therapy, to reduce pain and swelling.

- Apply ice 10 minutes on, 10 minutes off, and then 10 minutes on again. Do this every 2 hours.
- Never put ice directly on your skin; put a towel between the ice pack (or bag of frozen vegetables) and your skin.
- If you have an ice machine, follow the machine's specific instructions.



Your Regular Medications

You can start taking your regular medications unless your surgeon tells you something different.



Follow-Up Appointment

When you are discharged from the hospital, you will be told to make a follow-up appointment at the ambulatory clinic, with your surgeon, **or** with your family physician. You will be told which one to make the appointment with.

- You will need to make this appointment for 1-2 weeks after discharge.
- Write down your questions for the surgeon/physician before your appointment.



Reducing the Risk of Infection of Your Shoulder Replacement

To reduce the risk of infection *after* surgery, tell your doctor, nurse, dentist or other health care provider that you have a joint replacement, before having:

- Dental work (including routine cleaning).
- Surgery (such as bladder, lung, prostate or colon surgery).

You may be given an antibiotic to take before the procedure.



Health Concerns



Call your Surgeon if you have any of the following symptoms:

- You are not able to pass urine for more than 8-10 hours after discharge.
- Increasing pain or swelling that is not relieved by elevation, ice and pain medications.
- Incisions that are red, puffy, hot or leaking fluid more than 72 hrs after surgery.
- Signs of circulation problems (such as coolness, change in skin colour, numbness) that are not relieved by rest.

Who to Contact

If you can not reach your surgeon:

- Call your family doctor, **or**
- Go to a walk-in medical clinic, **or**
- If it is after clinic hours, go to a hospital emergency department.

For non-emergency health information and services:

Contact HealthLink BC – a free-of-charge health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia.



HealthLinkBC

- **Phone:** 8.1.1 from anywhere in BC.
7.1.1 for deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY)
- **Website:** www.healthlinkbc.ca
Translation services are available in over 130 languages.



Compliments and concerns

Quality care is important to all of us. You have the right to give feedback about your care and know you will be treated fairly. Your feedback gives us an opportunity to improve the care and services we provide. If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, you can speak directly to the person providing your care, or you may contact the Patient Care Quality Office.



Patient Care Quality Office
Royal Jubilee Hospital
1952 Bay Street Victoria, BC V8R 1J8
Memorial Pavilion, Watson Wing, Rm 315
Toll-free: 1.877.977.5797
Greater Victoria: 250.370.8323
patientcarequalityoffice@viha.ca

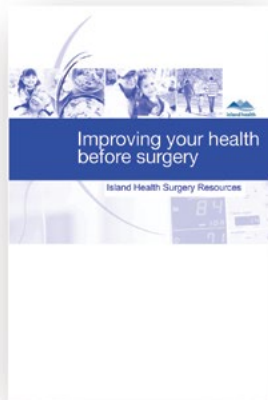
www.islandhealth.ca/patients-visitors/patient-care-quality-office

Resources

Island Health Resources

Ask a member of your healthcare team about getting a copy of these Island Health resources:

- Meeting your surgeon
- Improving your health before surgery
- Getting ready for and recovering from Surgery



Island Health Surgery Resources

www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/surgery/getting-ready-surgery

Tell us what you think!

After reading this booklet please respond to the following statements. Your answers and comments will help us improve the information.

Circle one number for each statement:

strongly
disagree

strongly
agree

I read all of the information provided.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

The information is easy to read.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

The information is easy to understand.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

Reading this information helped me
prepare for and recover from my surgery.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

The information answered my questions.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

I would recommend this information to
other patients.

1 2 3 4 5
|----->

Comments

I prefer to have this information in:

_____ A book just like this one

_____ Separate handouts on each topic that I need

Comments

I would have liked MORE information about:

I would have liked LESS information about:

What changes would you make in this booklet to make it better?

I am: ___ a patient ___ a family member



Thank you!

Please mail this evaluation form to:

Manager of Surgical Quality

Surgical Services 2nd Floor, Memorial Pavilion

Royal Jubilee Hospital

1952 Bay Street

Victoria, BC V8R 1J8



island health

islandhealth.ca

