

Shoulder Surgery

For patients going home after shoulder surgery

Read this pamphlet to learn:

- How to take care of yourself at home
- How to cope with pain
- What activities are safe
- What to do in case of an emergency
- When to see the surgeon for follow up



You have had an anesthetic or narcotic medicine.

- Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- Have an adult stay with you overnight.



What can I eat and drink after my surgery?

- You can eat and drink what you usually would right away. Slowly start by having fluids and soups on the day of surgery. Then return to your normal diet the next day.
- If you feel nauseated (upset stomach) or you are vomiting, you can get anti-nausea medicine such as Gravol from your pharmacy without a prescription. Follow the directions on the label.
- Keep drinking fluids until the nausea passes. Then slowly start to eat what you usually would.

How do I take care of my wound?

- Always keep your bandage (dressing) clean and dry.
- Remove your bandage 3 days after your surgery.
- Put clean bandages on the wounds or puncture sites. You can buy bandages at your local pharmacy. Keep the wounds covered with clean bandages until you see your surgeon.
- Put an ice compress on your shoulder for 20 minutes every hour. Do this for the first week after your surgery.
- Use ice packs or crushed ice in a plastic bag and wrapped in a thin towel. Be careful not to get the dressing wet.
- Do not put the ice directly on your skin. Cover the ice pack with a pillow case.

Cold compress cuff

If you bought the **cold compress cuff**, wait until the freezing in your shoulder and arm has worn off before putting it on.

When the feeling returns to your operated shoulder and arm, wear the cuff as much as possible for the first week. Follow the instructions included with the cold compress cuff.

Do not use heat packs on your operated shoulder.

- **If you have steri-strips (white tape):** Leave them in place until you see your surgeon. If they begin to fall off earlier, remove them and throw them away.
- **If you have stitches:** They will be removed at your next follow-up appointment.

When can I shower or bathe?

- You can take a shower 3 days after your surgery.
 - Before you take a shower, wrap your shoulder in plastic (your shoulder should be wrapped in plastic until your stitches or the strips have been taken out).
- **DO NOT take baths until your surgeon says it is safe to do so.**
 - Keep the dressings and puncture sites clean and dry.
 - If the dressings get wet, replace them with clean, dry ones.

How do I cope with pain?

You will have pain after this surgery, but it will get better with time. To help you cope with the pain and get you back to your everyday activities, we will give you a prescription for pain medication. Fill the prescription at a pharmacy. Follow the directions on the bottle.

- If you had a **regional block** (your shoulder or arm is numb or frozen) it may take a few hours for the feeling in your shoulder to return to normal.
- Start taking the medication when you begin to feel tingling and feeling returning to your operated arm. Do NOT wait until the pain becomes severe.

- Take the medication as directed on the bottle. Gradually decrease your pain medication as your pain gets better.
- We may also give you a prescription for your swelling. Take the prescription to a pharmacy to have it filled and follow the directions on the bottle.
- It is best to take your pain medicine before you do any activities that may cause more pain.
- For any pain and discomfort at night, we recommend that you sleep with 2 or 3 pillows, or sleep in a recliner for the first few days.
- To prevent nausea, take your medications on a full stomach.
- If the nausea continues, take Gravol as directed until the nausea passes.

Safely store and dispose of your pain medicine

Pain medicine that is not stored or disposed of safely could be stolen or taken by mistake.

Safe storage

- Store pain medicine in a locked drawer or cabinet.
- Do not share your pain medicine. Pain medicine prescribed to you can be dangerous to others.

Safe disposal

- It is dangerous to keep unused or expired pain medicine that you no longer need.
- Take unused or expired pain medicine to a pharmacy for safe disposal.
- Do not flush medicine down the toilet.
- Do not throw medicine in the garbage.

What if I am constipated?

Pain medications can cause constipation.

To prevent constipation:

- Drink 3 to 5 glasses of water every day. Each glass should be about 8 ounces.
- Eat foods that are high in fibre (for example bran and fruits).
- A **stool softener** can help you with constipation. You can buy a stool softener without a prescription from your pharmacy. Follow the directions on the bottle.
- Or, if you have not had a bowel movement for 72 hours, take a laxative like Milk of Magnesia by following the directions on the bottle. You can buy this from your pharmacy without a prescription.

How much activity is safe?

- When you go home, rest on the first day.
- If your surgeon used a regional block to freeze your shoulder or arm, it will take 4 to 12 hours for the feeling to return to normal again. It will feel numb and weak and you will have no control of your shoulder or arm.
- Do NOT use your arm and hand until all the feeling and strength has come back.
- **While your arm is frozen, protect it from being bumped or injured.** Be careful with things that are hot, like tea or coffee. You could burn yourself without feeling it.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions about what exercises you can do for your operated shoulder or arm.
- If your surgeon asked you to wear an **immobilizer or sling**, follow your surgeon's instructions on how to use it and when to remove the immobilizer or sling.

- If you need information on how to wear the immobilizer or sling, ask your day surgery nurse for a pamphlet. (Or find it online at www.uhnpatienteducation.ca).
- Call your surgeon's office if you have any questions about exercises for your operated shoulder or arm.

Activities at home

You can go back to doing your normal activities, but avoid doing activities with your operated arm or shoulder.

- **Do NOT** do any strenuous activities, exercises or sports such as swimming, shoveling snow and weight lifting until your surgeon tells you it is safe.
- **Do NOT** lift with the operated hand or shoulder. For example, do not carry groceries, children or pets.
- Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe to go back to work, play sports and start activities with the operated arm.

If your surgeon has arranged physiotherapy:

- This should begin as instructed by your surgeon. Try to find an outpatient centre close to your home or work.
- If you are being treated at Altum Health, they may suggest an outpatient physiotherapy centre.

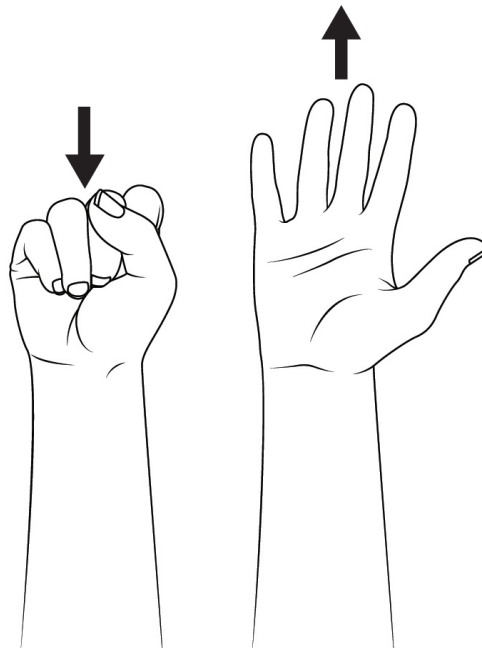
Can I exercise my operated hand?

You can exercise your hand but remember to keep it in the immobilizer, as instructed.

Open and close fist exercise

Do this exercise once every hour.

- Squeeze your hand in a fist tightly and hold for 3 seconds, then release.
- Open and close your fist 5 times.
- Fist exercises can be done while wearing the immobilizer/sling.





Watch for these problems

Call your surgeon or your family doctor or go to the Toronto Western Hospital emergency department if any of the problems below happen to you.

If you are from out of town, go to the nearest emergency department.

Severe pain

- Severe pain that does not get better when you take the medication that was prescribed. Have the phone number of your pharmacy ready when you call because the doctor may want to call your pharmacy to change your prescription..

Swelling

- Your arm or hand becomes swollen and painful and you cannot move it and there is a change in the colour of your hand and fingers.

Fever

- Temperature higher than 38 °C or 101 °F

Pus coming from the wound sites

- If you have yellowish or green fluid leaking from the wound sites and/or redness at the wound sites

Your follow-up appointment

You should have a follow up appointment 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.

If you do not have an appointment call your surgeon's office or the Fracture clinic to make one.

Dr. Hall 416 864 6006

Dr. Leroux 416 603 6286

Dr. Matthies 289 813 5075

Dr. Moro 905 540 8448

Dr. Paul 416 603 5839

Dr. Pook 519 267 9299

Dr. Syed 416 603 5281

Dr. Veillette 416 603 5929

Other _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Altum Health: If you are being treated at Altum Health, they will call you with the date, time and location of your follow-up appointment.

Where is the Fracture Clinic?

Fell Pavilion – 1st Floor (Room 577)

Toronto Western Hospital, 399 Bathurst Street

For more information visit our website at

www.uhn.ca or www.uhnpatienteducation.ca



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