

Surgical Services
Shoulder Surgery
Discharge Instructions

Follow Up:

- You will be seen in the orthopedic clinic one week after your surgery. Please see the attached form for the date and time.

What to Expect After Surgery:

Pain:

- You can expect to feel some pain after your surgery. It is normal to have a moderate level of pain for the first few days after surgery.
- You may have received freezing in your shoulder. The numb feeling can last from 10 to 24 hours. It is normal to feel numbness or tingling in your arm and for your fingers, hand, or arm to feel heavy as well.
- To help relieve pain:
 - If you were given a prescription for pain medication, be sure to get it filled and to take the medication as instructed. This may require you to set an alarm clock to take them through the night while sleeping or during the day while napping.
 - Be sure to take your pain medication as soon as you start to feel anything in your shoulder. It takes from 30 to 60 minutes for the medication to start working.
 - Ice packs can be used to reduce swelling and pain. Apply the ice pack for 20 minutes on/20 minutes off for the first week after your surgery. Do **NOT** put the ice directly on the skin.

Incision:

- Your incisions are closed with sutures and/or steri strips and covered by a bandage (dressing).
- It is important to keep the incision and all bandages **dry**. Be sure that any ice packs applied to your incision are sealed and do not leak onto the dressings.
- Leave your bandages on and **dry** until you see your surgeon for your follow-up appointment.

Diet:

- To help with healing, resume a well-balanced diet.
- A mild stool softener may be necessary when taking pain medications to prevent constipation. Stool softener can be purchased over-the-counter at the pharmacy. The pharmacist can assist you.

Nausea and Vomiting:

- It is normal to experience feelings of an upset stomach (nausea) after surgery.
- To help relieve nausea/vomiting:
 - Drink small sips of cool fluid as needed.
 - Take dimenhydrinate (Gravol) to relieve nausea. You can buy this at the pharmacy.

Recovery:

- **No** bathing, hot tubs, or swimming is permitted for 6 weeks.
- Your arm will be secured in a shoulder immobilizer (sling) and you will be expected to wear it at **ALL** times. Follow your surgeon's instructions about removing the sling to do arm pit care. The arm sling will be worn for up to 6 weeks.
- Always use your non-surgical arm to support your surgical arm whenever you have your shoulder sling off. It is important that your arm is supported at **ALL** times.
- Do **NOT** raise your surgical arm up or to the side until you are instructed to do so by your surgeon.
- Do **NOT** use your surgical arm to reach, grasp, or lift ANY objects.
- Do **NOT** use your surgical arm to support any body weight until you have been instructed by your surgeon.
- Support your surgical arm with pillows when sleeping/napping. Do **NOT** lay flat. You may find it helpful to rest in an upright position such as in a recliner chair during your recovery.

Exercises: exercises that you should be doing during your recovery include:

Hand and Wrist

- Bend your wrist forward and backward
- Open and close your hand
- Using the ball that came with your sling, squeeze the ball and then relax.

Important Reminders:

- No driving for 6 weeks.
- Walking is suggested but no other sports are permitted without discussing them with your surgeon first.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions for all activities.

- Return to work depends on the type of work you do, you will need to discuss this with your surgeon.
- Complete recovery after surgery may take 3 to 6 months.

Contact your surgeon’s office, a walk-in clinic, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department for the any of the following:

- Fever greater than 38.3 °C (101°F) or chills.
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Increased pain, redness, swelling, and/or smelly discharge from the incision.
- Bleeding that is soaking through the dressings.
- Pain that is not being controlled with the medications prescribed.
- Extreme swelling of the arm or hand, tingling in the fingers or hand after the freezing has worn off.

Medications given at the hospital include:

Medication Name and Time Given	When to take again

Other Instructions:

*** This flyer contains general information which cannot be construed as specific advice to an individual patient. All statements in the flyer must be interpreted by your personal Physician or therapist who has the knowledge of the stage and the extent of your particular medical condition. Any reference throughout the document on specific pharmaceutical products does not imply endorsement of any of these products. Please visit our website at www.nbrhc.on.ca
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