



Dr. Joshua Alpert  
Post-Operative Surgery Instructions:  
Shoulder: Total or Reverse Shoulder  
Replacement

**Immediately After Surgery in the Recovery Room:**

- After surgery you will be taken to the recovery room. Your family will be contacted after you have spent some time in recovery, and you have arrived on the floor. Once on the floor, they can see you. You will have a sling on your operative extremity. The sling should stay on whenever you are on your feet or sleeping but can be removed when resting on the couch or sitting at home.
- You may go home the day of surgery or stay one night in the hospital, depending on your medical history.
- **DO NOT LIFT THE ARM FOR THE FIRST 6 WEEKS.** This is to allow the tissue to scar in and avoid dislocating the new joint. However, it is encouraged that you move your elbow, hand, and fingers as much as possible to increase circulation. If you have had a nerve block, that may not be possible on the recovering extremity for up to 24 hours.
- You may have a cooling device on your shoulder. This is used for the post-operative area to reduce pain and swelling.
- If a nerve block has been used, its purpose is to decrease pain in your shoulder and will wear off after surgery anywhere between 6-24 hours. This can vary significantly by individual.
- You will receive a prescription for pain medication for your return home. We recommend taking it immediately when you get home, then as needed. Please note that common side effects of the pain medication are nausea and constipation. Any over the counter stool softener will work for constipation. If you have intolerable nausea, please call our office to discuss further.

**After Surgery at Home:**

- Post-operative pain medication was sent to the pharmacy prior to surgery. The postoperative pain medication standard is Norco.
- For your comfort and the protection of the reconstructed shoulder joint, the sling is usually necessary for 6 weeks, unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon. You should wear the sling whenever you are on your feet or sleeping. You may take the sling off for hygiene purposes or while sitting on the couch.

- The dressing on the shoulder should stay on until your first postoperative visit. You may shower as long as you are able to keep the dressing out of the water, clean and dry.
- Any cooling device given is to be used as necessary for 3-7 days. Cooling helps reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation. When you notice it is no longer offering any benefit, feel free to stop using it.
- Pain medication: We will not call in medication refills after 5pm or on the weekend. Please let our office know during business hours when a refill is needed, and we will call it in per office policy.
- Physical therapy recommendations will be made during your first office visit after surgery.

#### **First Post-Op Office Visit:**

- Please arrange to see Dr. Alpert, his PA Christina, or PA Joe in the office 3-10 days after surgery.
- We will start physical therapy at your first post-operative appointment with range of motion of the elbow and wrist. We will not do any therapy involving the shoulder until 6 weeks after surgery. The total amount of physical therapy you may need can last up to 6 months.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding your surgery or the rehabilitation protocol, please contact Dr. Alpert's office at 224.293.1170 and ask for Christina (PA), Joe (PA), or Nikki (secretary).

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