

# Preparing for your **TOTAL SHOULDER REPLACEMENT**



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Achieve Home Care has developed this booklet for your convenience in preparing for your upcoming surgery. This book is intended to familiarize you with all three phases of your upcoming Total Shoulder Replacement:

1. Preoperative preparation
2. The surgery itself
3. Postoperative recovery and rehabilitation

We firmly believe that optimizing your preoperative education will not only make this entire experience more pleasant for you, but it will also enhance the outcome of your surgery.

As you will soon appreciate, this process is a team endeavor. It is crucial for you to prepare yourself to be an active informed member of the team.

These are general guidelines for all patients preparing for total shoulder replacement. Invariably, there will be additional concerns unique to your specific set of circumstances. Please do not hesitate to discuss these concerns with us as they arise so that they can be adequately addressed.

Attached, you will find guidelines that will help you to prepare for your upcoming surgery. You should find information on how to prepare your home, how to pack, and what to expect. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information.

We believe that our orthopaedic team and system is superb and we look forward to assisting you on your pathway to recovery. If you do not wish to have Achieve Home Care provide your postoperative care, please contact us and we will remove you from our contact list.

We look forward to helping you achieve an optimal outcome.

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Table of Contents

**TOTAL SHOULDER REPLACEMENT**

<b>I. Preoperative</b>	
<b>A. Check List</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Preparing your home for your return</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>C. What to bring to the hospital</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>II. During Your Hospital Stay</b>	
<b>A. Physical and Occupational Therapy</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>B. Immobilizer</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>C. Nursing</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>D. Hospital Stay</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>E. Discharge Planning</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>F. Prescriptions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>G. Ice</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>H. Compressive Stockings</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>III. Postoperative: What to expect after you've gone home</b>	
<b>A. Daily Activities</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>B. Physical Therapy</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>C. Walking</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>D. Nursing</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>E. Bathing/Shower</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>F. Sutures/Staples</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>G. Surgical Site Care</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>H. Will I Need to Change Bandages</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>I. Driving</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>J. Medications</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>K. Emergent Care</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>IV. Frequently Asked Questions</b> .....	<b>12</b>

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# I.

## PREOPERATIVE

### A.

### CHECKLIST

\_\_\_ Read this book from cover to cover.

\_\_\_ Prepare your home for your return. Recommendations are made on page 5.

\_\_\_ Pre-surgical appointment with the surgeon – Appointment Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Pre-surgical screening appointment at the hospital – Appointment Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Routine blood work and testing will be performed at this appointment.*
- *You will have a consultation with an anesthesia representative at this appointment.*

\_\_\_ Pet Owners: Make arrangements for someone to care for your pet(s) postoperative.

\_\_\_ Sign the attached letter for discharge planning (Take this letter and the Achieve Home Care card with you to the hospital/surgery center. Give the letter to the nurse who admits you).

\_\_\_ Arrive at the hospital/surgery center at the designated time.

- *Bring your Achieve Home Care home health letter/card*

\_\_\_ Get your home health questions answered by calling Achieve Home Care.

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## PREOPERATIVE

### **B. PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR YOUR RETURN AFTER SURGERY**

Please consider the following recommendations:

- \_\_\_ If you live alone, arrange to have someone (a family member or friend) stay with you and/or assist you at home after surgery, ideally for 1 – 2 weeks.
  
- \_\_\_ Recliners are found to be the most comfortable for sleeping and resting following your surgery. If you do not have access to a recliner postoperatively, your physical therapist will instruct you in alternative positions.
  
- \_\_\_ Eliminate hazards that may cause you to trip:
  - Remove throw rugs and other potential obstacles from your floors.
  - Beware of small pets/pet toys.
  - Remove electrical cords and phone cords from walkways.
  
- \_\_\_ Minimize your shopping needs during the first several weeks after surgery.
  - Stock up on food and supplies.
  - Prepare meals ahead of time and store them in the freezer.
  - Store food/supplies within easy reach (waist height).
  - Prepare a list of your favorite home delivery numbers.
  
- \_\_\_ Equip your bathroom with safety features.
  - Rubber bath mat in shower stall/bathtub
  - Non-slip mat on bathroom floor
  - Hand held shower attachment for control while bathing (Optional)
  
- \_\_\_ Arrange things you might need so you can reach them more easily:
  - Phone numbers of friends, relatives and your doctor
  - Medications
  - Telephone
  - Magazines
  - Cooking/eating utensils
  
- \_\_\_ Ice packs will be used after surgery to decrease pain. You can use commercial ice packs, but a bag of frozen peas or corn works just as well.

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## PREOPERATIVE

### C. WHAT TO BRING TO THE HOSPITAL

- \_\_\_ • Any admitting papers your surgeon may have given you.
- \_\_\_ • Your signed home health agency of choice letter.
- \_\_\_ • Comfortable walking shoes with rubber soles and a heel back are recommended, but not necessary.
- \_\_\_ • A short robe and loose fitting clothing (i.e., loose pajamas, baggy shorts) are recommended, but not necessary. Button up shirts are ideal.
  - *You will be in a hospital gown initially.*
  - *Your subsequent clothing should easily fit over the sterile dressings that will cover your incision.*
  
- \_\_\_ • Personal toiletries
- \_\_\_ • Eyeglasses (if you require them)
- \_\_\_ • A book or hobby (i.e., crossword puzzles) for entertainment and relaxation (all of the hospital rooms have TVs).
- \_\_\_ • The telephone numbers of those whom you may wish to call from the hospital.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT BRING TO THE HOSPITAL

- Your own medication(s)
- Jewelry
- Large amounts of cash
- Other valuables

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## II. WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

### A. Physical and Occupational Therapy:

During your hospital stay, you will have two sessions per day with either a physical therapist or occupational therapist.

1. You have three essential therapy goals to achieve during your hospital stay:
  - a. Transferring into and out of bed safely.
  - b. Performing exercises of the wrist/ hand to initiate motion and minimize swelling.
  - c. Demonstrate awareness of precautions/positioning.

Your therapist will assist you with each of these goals.

**Remember**... your compliance is a vital component in determining the ultimate degree of success of your new shoulder. Your rehabilitation program is by no means limited to your formal sessions with your physical therapist. You will be instructed in exercise that you should perform independently throughout the day.

Your hospital stay prepares you for your discharge to home. An Achieve Home Care physical therapist will continue your postoperative care in the comfort of your home. Your physical therapist will instruct you in positions and precautions to protect your surgery repair, progressing as your surgeon orders. You will also be taught how to get into and out of your shower and bed as well as how to bathe and dress. The therapist will also instruct you in exercises to keep the rest of your body well-conditioned.



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## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR HOSPITAL STAY (cont.)

### **B. Immobilizer:**

- Your operated arm will be in an immobilizer that will be applied immediately following surgery and will remain on for 4-6 weeks. The purpose of the immobilizer is to protect your surgical repair. You will be instructed in bathing, dressing, positions and precautions.

### **C. Nursing:**

- Nursing will be monitoring your surgical wound site, vital signs, and pain level.

### **D. Hospital Stay:**

The average length of hospital stay after surgery is 2-3 days.

### **E. Discharge Planning:**

The majority of individuals undergoing this procedure progress extremely well at home with home health care. Occasionally, inpatient rehabilitation is necessary. Skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation centers are examples of inpatient facilities. Several criteria will indicate if you are a candidate for this type of extended care. The hospital staff will make this decision with your input, following surgery. If you would like for us (Achieve Home Care) to provide your home health service, please inform the hospital or nursing facilities that we work closely with, for you to consider. If an inpatient transfer is required, the hospital discharge planner will facilitate this transition. Please inform the discharge planner that you have chosen Achieve Home Care to provide your home needs. One of our representatives will follow your progress in the inpatient facility. This will ensure a smooth transition to home care. Please contact Achieve Home Care (813) 969-3700 if you have any questions or concerns during your inpatient stay or to notify us of your anticipated discharge. A business card is also included in this packet.

### **F. Prescriptions:**

You will receive prescriptions for pain medication at the time of your discharge. These prescriptions should be filled the day you go home.

### **G. Ice:**

Application of ice is an important aspect of reducing postoperative shoulder pain. May be used 20-30 minutes per hour, at a minimum of 4 times a day.

### **H. Compressive Stockings (Ted hose):**

Worn for 24-48 hours after surgery.

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### **III. WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU GO HOME**

#### **A. Daily Activities:**

You will need assistance with meal preparation and transportation.  
You may need assistance positioning your surgical arm.  
You will need assistance dressing and bathing.

#### **B. Physical Therapy:**

You have essential therapy goals to achieve:

1. Transferring into and out of bed safely
2. Performing exercises of the wrist and hand to initiate motion and minimize swelling
3. Performing other appropriate exercises as ordered by your surgeon
4. Demonstrate awareness of positioning
5. Performing your functional activities (bathing, dressing, grooming) observing your precautions
6. Applying and removing your immobilizer or sling
7. Independent entering and exiting your residence
8. Using ice as instructed

An Achieve Home Care physical therapist will come to your home the day after you are discharged from the hospital. They will call you prior to coming. If you have not heard from Achieve Home Care by 10:00 a.m. the morning after you arrive home, please call the Achieve Home Care Ortho Team @ (813) 969-3700. A physical therapist will visit you several times until your goals have been met. Outpatient physical therapy is occasionally necessary after discharge from home health physical therapy program following this procedure.

#### **C. Walking/Exercise:**

Even when you are seemingly performing exercises/activities that do not involve your surgical shoulder, there is research to suggest that walking and non-involved upper extremity exercises may cause undesired motion or muscle contraction of the surgical arm. You should avoid aggressive walking. Also, avoid strenuous activities with your non-surgical arm. Please check with your surgeon prior to initiating/resuming strenuous activities.

#### **D. Nursing:**

An Achieve Home Care nurse will arrive at your home 24 hours after your hospital/inpatient discharge.

Nursing care will include:

- Assessment of wound
- Instruction in signs and symptoms of infection
- Dressing changes
- Instruction in medication regime

Frequency and duration is based on need, physician orders and insurance authorization. The nurse will visit daily until there is no drainage (usually 3 days).

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## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU GO HOME (Cont.)

### E. Bathing/Shower:

A sponge bath should be performed until suture/staple removal.

You are allowed to take a shower 24 hours after your sutures or staples have been removed.

### F. Sutures/Staples Removal:

Sutures are removed 7-14 days after surgery. This will be your first post-op visit.

### G. Surgical Site Care:

- Your paper strips (steristrips) will be removed at your first visit after surgery. There will be underlying stitches that will usually not be visible to you.
- Keep your incision clean and dry at all times until your sutures have been removed. Do not shower or take a bath until your sutures/staples have been removed, unless your surgeon tells you that you may do so.
- Do not wear tight fitting clothes over your incision.
- If your incision is sensitive, you may cover it with a sterile gauze pad.
- Avoid exposure to direct sunlight for one year. Direct exposure to sunlight during this period will make your scar more evident. Apply high SPF sun block to your incision when it is exposed to sunlight.
- Infections are rare following total shoulder replacement. However, you must remain alert to the possibility.

### H. Will I need to change any bandages after surgery?

No. You will go home with steristrips covering your incision site. Your Achieve Home Care nurse will inspect the incision site.

### I. When can I drive?

Driving is permitted 6 weeks following most primary shoulder replacement surgeries. Driving is prohibited while taking pain medication.

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## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU GO HOME (Cont.)

### J. Medications:

You will be given various prescriptions prior to your hospital discharge. Pain medication may alter your judgment and reflexes. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages or driving while you are taking pain medications. Take all of your medications as directed by your surgeon or your internal medicine doctor.

### K. Emergent Care Symptoms: What symptoms do I need to be aware of?

Driving is permitted 6 weeks following most total shoulder replacements.  
Driving is prohibited while taking pain medication.

**Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room if you experience:**

- Chest pain or difficulty breathing
- Calf pain, swelling or a hot feeling in your leg
- Any difficulty breathing, or pain in your side or back when breathing

**These are potential indicators of pulmonary embolism which can be life threatening**

### **Warning Signs:**

Which warrant a call to the physician's office and Home Health Agency include:

- Severe and rapidly increasing pain, chills or fevers (over 101.5°)
- Drainage from the incision
- A marked change in redness or swelling of the incision area

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## IV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. How much home care will I need after surgery?

A nurse will visit your home the day after you are discharged from the hospital/surgery center. Approximately 3 visits will be provided for dressing changes and wound assessment. A physical therapist will visit your home several times depending on needs and physician's orders. The physical therapist will instruct you in:

- a. Positioning/precautions to protect your surgical repair
- b. Positioning/precautions to decrease swelling and stiffness
- c. Activities of daily living including bathing and dressing

Usually at the end of your home therapy, you will be independent with your home exercise program. You will also be performing your daily activities with little or no difficulty. Outpatient therapy is occasionally necessary following this procedure.

### 2. What is the cost of my Home Health Care?

The cost to you depends on your insurance provider.

**Medicare:** Part A covers your home health care. It usually pays 100% of your home health needs, including physical therapy and nursing. It does not cover medication.

In order to be eligible for these benefits, the Medicare criteria are:

- a. That you are homebound (leaving home is a taxing effort and requires the assistance of another person).
- b. That you are under the care of a physician and are receiving a skilled service, such as physical therapy or nursing.
- c. That you are progressing in therapy.  
(Outpatient therapy is covered by Part B and is covered at 80%)

### **Private Insurance:**

Private insurance is highly variable. We will contact your insurance company prior to surgery and request your benefit information. Achieve Home Care currently has the following insurance contracts: Medicare, Aetna, BCBS, Humana, Tricare, United, Workers' Compensation. Many insurance companies require a co-pay or will cover a percentage of your home health care. The co-pay is usually the same for outpatient therapy as it is for a therapist coming to your home. For questions regarding your specific responsibility, please contact your insurance company. Aetna, BCBS and Cigna are managed by Care Centrix. They will not provide the home health agency with any co-pay information. Please contact them directly at 1-800-808-1902. Authorization will be received prior to your home care visit and will be discussed with you at the first visit.

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