

Anatomic Shoulder Replacement - Recovery Guide

Discharge

You may be discharged on the day of surgery, or spend a night in hospital.

Sling

The sling is to be worn for 6 weeks unless advised otherwise.

You may come out of the sling when sitting comfortably in a chair, using a computer, eating, and performing exercises.

Bandage / Dressings / Sutures

You will be discharged from hospital with a dressing covering your shoulder wound. Leave the dressing in place until your 2-3 week review and we will remove it. The dressings are water resistant. Showering is fine but please keep your dressings relatively dry until your post op appointment.

Swelling / Icing

Post-operative swelling of the shoulder is normal and should gradually decrease over the course of a few weeks. Regular icing is effective for managing both pain and swelling. Continue icing your shoulder for as long as swelling persists, which may last a few weeks. If the swelling worsens, or if you notice redness around the wound or experience a fever, please contact our office immediately or see your local doctor. For after-hours concerns, you can also reach out to the hospital emergency department.

Pain Relief / Medications (*allergies permitting*)

Your anaesthetist will have prescribed a range of painkillers for you to go home with. You should take them as prescribed. In general you should take paracetamol regularly, followed by anti-inflammatories if prescribed and then strong painkillers (such as Palexia/Tapentadol) for top-up pain relief. Cease these medications as soon as the pain allows.

Dr Robinson recommends taking Vitamin C 1000-1500 mg daily from 2 days prior to surgery until at least 3 weeks post surgery.

Post-Operative Appointments

2-3 weeks: Your first post op clinic review. A nurse will remove your dressing and review your wound.
3 months: Review to see how you are progressing
12 months: Review with an X-Ray of your shoulder

Return to Work / Driving

A reasonable goal for returning to office work is within 2-4 weeks. For more physically demanding jobs, the target is typically 3-4 months. Driving can usually be resumed around 6 weeks, once the sling is no longer required.

It is important to note that you will not be covered by your car insurance if you are involved in a motor vehicle accident before 6 weeks.

Return to Activities guide

Running: 8-10 weeks
Swimming: aquatic therapy 4-6 weeks, breaststroke 8 weeks, freestyle 5-6 months
Tennis: 5-6 months
Golf: 5-6 months
Gym based activities may commence at 4 months with modification.