

Patient guidelines and instructions (post-op)

Total shoulder arthroplasty,
reverse shoulder arthroplasty,
and hemi-arthroplasty

SSM Health's SLUCare Physician Group
Orthopedic Surgery at SSM Health St. Clare Hospital
St. Francis Building
1011 Bowles Ave., Suite 400, Fenton, MO 63026
Main office: **314-617-2970** | Nurse: **314-617-2963**



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Shoulder and Elbow Specialist

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About the surgery – what to expect

Pain/Swelling/Bruising: There will be pain and swelling after surgery. To help with these issues please make sure to ice and elevate your shoulder. Ice will need to be administered 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for the first 48-72 hours after surgery, then on an as-needed basis. Elevation is important; if you have swelling, elevate above heart level using several pillows. For the first 72 hours, take pain medicine as directed to ensure your pain stays controlled; then take it on an as-needed basis.

Swelling and bruising is common following these procedures. A helpful tool to reduce swelling in your hands is modelling clay or Play-Doh®; after surgery, you can squeeze this in your hand, kneading it with your fingers to reduce pressure. Bruising can be common down the side of the body and chest; this is in part from the positioning during surgery.

Length of hospital stay: Arthroplasty can be outpatient (go home the same day), if you do well with anesthesia. Otherwise patients can stay inpatient, ranging from 1-2 nights depending on pain level.

Immobilizer: A brace is to be worn after surgery for six (6) weeks, removed only for showering and exercise.

Medication: Per Dr. Otto's orders. Please allow 24 hours to process ANY medication request. By law, all pain medications have to be a written prescription.

Medical clearance

You may need to visit your other doctors to check that you have no health problems that could interfere with your surgery. We will send the clearance, but contact your primary physician to determine if you need to be seen.

Pre-op diet

- Drink more fluids.
- Eat more fiber to avoid constipation caused by medication.
- Eat foods rich in iron, vitamin C, and calcium.
- **DO NOT EAT** any solid foods or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery or on the day of surgery.



Smoking

Smoking is not only harmful to your lungs, heart, and blood vessels, it also slows the healing process and places you at risk during surgery. If you need help quitting, here are some helpful resources:

- Missouri Tobacco Quitline **1-800-QUITNOW**
- American Lung Association **lung.org**
- Quitter's Circle **quitterscircle.com**

Prepare your home

- Remove clutter, wires, and throw rugs on the floor that could cause you to trip.
- Obtain a rubber bath mat for the shower and a non-slip rug for the bathroom floor.
- Place frequently used objects at waist level for easy reach.
- Obtain button-down or loose tops.
- Make meals that can be frozen and easily reheated.
- Arrange for help after you return home from family and friends.

How to clean your shoulder prior to surgery

- Use one (1) tube of 10% Benzoyl Peroxide gel (**over-the-counter acne face wash**).
- Apply to shoulder and armpit area for three (3) mornings before surgery, including the day of surgery.
- Apply the solution to rinsed shoulder for three (3) minutes before washing it away.
- Apply over-the-counter acne face wash.

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Checklist: what to bring

- Current list of medications and supplements, noting which ones have been stopped
- Loose-fitting clothing (such as shorts and t-shirts), undergarments, socks, eyeglasses
- Slippers with backs and rubberized soles; or, walking shoes with Velcro® closures or elastic shoe laces
- Personal toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, denture cleanser/cup, deodorant, electric or other razor, shaving cream, comb, NO powders)
- Hearing aid and batteries
- CPAP machine settings, tubing, machine
- Cell phone or calling card
- Driver's license or photo ID, insurance card, Medicare, or Medicaid card
- Copy of your Advance Directives
- Important telephone numbers (include contact information of the person bringing you home)

Do not bring:

- A walker. The person bringing you home may bring a walker at the time of discharge.
- Valuables. No jewelry, credit cards, checkbooks or cash
- Your own medications, unless approved prior to surgery.

Arrival at the hospital for surgery

Please arrive at the hospital on the day of your surgery:

SSM Health St. Clare Hospital

1015 Bowles Ave., Fenton, MO 63026
636-496-2000

When you arrive

Report to the Same-Day Surgery Department two and a half hours (2.5) prior to your scheduled surgery.

- You will be escorted to your room, where you'll change into a hospital gown.
- Nursing staff will welcome and orient you to the features of your hospital room.
- A focused health assessment will be performed.
- You will be seen by an anesthesia care team, and then prepared for surgery (intravenous fluids started, preoperative medications given, etc.).
- Your surgical team will escort you to the operating room.

- Your family will be directed to the surgical waiting room until you are transferred to the orthopedic floor.
- The patient liaison will keep your family informed during your surgery.

Immediately after surgery

- Your surgeon will meet with your family after surgery.
- You will be transported to the PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit).
- You will be monitored for approximately two hours (blood pressure, pulse, and temperature will be monitored frequently).
- An anesthesiologist will evaluate you for readiness to transfer to the orthopedic floor.

Post-operative care

- Your vital signs and assessments will continue to be monitored. Your blood will be drawn early in the morning and your drain will be assessed for removal.
- Your discharge planner will assess and work with you and your family regarding your discharge needs. You will be discharged home once you have met your goals.
- Your nurse will give you written instructions on wound care, medications, precautions, activity level, and signs and symptoms of complications to report to your doctor.
- Your dressing will be assessed prior to discharge.
- Your friend or family member transporting you home will need to park outside the Main Entrance of the hospital. A staff member will accompany you to the car.

Physical therapy in the hospital

You will participate in physical therapy after your surgery. Your occupational therapist will assess your ability to perform daily activities and will recommend appropriate assistive devices to increase your independence. The therapy team will teach you shoulder exercises, how to do your daily exercises once you are home, and how to wear the sling. You will be given written instructions for your home exercise program by the therapist.

Consider asking for pain medication 30 minutes before physical therapy sessions; this will help you remain comfortable and achieve maximum benefit from your therapy sessions. Additional therapy services will be determined at Dr. Otto's discretion and will be ordered no sooner than six (6) weeks post-op if deemed necessary.

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Returning home

Wound/suture care: You will have a waterproof dressing over the incision. Change this dressing in 7 days with a new waterproof dressing provided. Leave the steri strips in place if they are present. Do not put ointments on the incision.

Shower: You may use a plastic bag or cling wrap over the incision for the first two weeks if dressing seal is broken. Make sure it is secure with tape before showering. Keep dry until sutures are removed. **KEEP INCISION DRY** at all times.

Sleeping/positioning: Complaints of pain worsening at night are common, usually making it difficult to sleep. A recliner will be the most comfortable location for sleeping and resting. It will also make it easier to get up. Most patients sleep in a recliner for the first two weeks post-op. If you do not have access to a recliner, you will be most comfortable sleeping on your back with a small towel rolled under your elbow and a pillow under your head, but NOT under the involved shoulder. Your hand will be resting on your abdomen.

Suture removal: Removal of sutures occurs 12-14 days post-op. Please keep your incision clean and dry until sutures are out.

Driving: Driving is discouraged for a minimum of six (6) weeks post-op. Driving is not recommended while you remain in the immobilizer or while taking narcotics.

When to be concerned: If you notice any unusual swelling, redness, fever, chills, odor, excessive drainage, or bleeding, please contact the office immediately at **314-617-2970 opt 3** or the nurse at **314-617-2963** during business hours. After business hours and during weekends, call SSM Health St. Clare Hospital at **636-496-2000** and request to page Dr. Randall Otto.

Timeline for surgical recovery

0-6 weeks post-op: You will remain in sling at all times with no use of the arm. You may come out of the immobilizer ONLY to do gentle pendulum exercises or any additional exercises approved by Dr. Otto, and to shower. Perform exercises by Dr. Otto 3-5 times a day at 10-15 repetitions each time.

6-12 weeks post-op: You will come out of the sling and use your arm for simple actions (eating, dressing, and bathing). No overhead lifting, no below shoulder lifting greater than 1-2 lbs. Perform cane/stick exercises prescribed by Dr. Otto and physical therapy 1-2 times a day for 5-10 minutes each.

12-18 weeks post-op: You will build strength increasing slowly as tolerated. Continue doing the “wall slide” exercise and the “stretch behind the back” exercise.

18 weeks post-op and beyond: activity as tolerated.

Follow-up visits

Your first follow-up visit to your surgeon is planned 12-14 days after discharge. Please call our office to schedule an appointment.

Required office visits after surgery

- 12-14 days post-op
- Six (6) weeks post-op
- Three (3) months post-op
- Six (6) months post-op
- One (1) year post-op (subject to change pending post-op recovery)

