



London Health Sciences Centre

**Total Shoulder  
Replacement  
Patient Information**

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Occupational and Physiotherapy Services

# Total Shoulder Replacement

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## Day of Surgery

We ask that you please bring button down shirts or clothing that is large, loose and/or short sleeved.

## Length of Stay

Typically patients who have had a total shoulder replacement are discharged from hospital 1-2 days after the surgery.

## Restrictions

- After surgery, your arm will be immobilized in a sling
- The sling must remain on at all times unless otherwise stated by your Surgeon or Therapist
- You will not be allowed to use your arm for activities such as lifting, carrying, grooming, and dressing
- If you use a walker or cane your therapist will discuss what is appropriate to use after surgery
- If you feel unbalanced without your cane or walker you may want to consider renting a wheel-chair for a short period of time to use at home

## Range of Motion

Range of motion is permitted to your shoulder after surgery with the guidance of a Physiotherapist, unless otherwise directed by your Surgeon. You will not be allowed to put your hand behind your back or reach your arm out to the side.

## What to Expect after Surgery

### *Incision Care*

- On the first day after surgery, your Nurse will remove and change the initial operative dressing on your shoulder and adjust your sling properly to accommodate swelling and the new dressing
- You should not get the area over the incision wet until your stitches are removed
- The stitches are removed 7 – 10 days after surgery

### *Physiotherapy*

A Physiotherapist will also see you the first day after surgery and do the following:

- Put ice on your shoulder
- Go over the exercises that you are to do when you leave the hospital
- Have you up and walking within the room and to the bathroom to make sure you are safe to be up walking on your own

When you are ready to leave the hospital:

- Your therapist will give you a physiotherapy referral prior to your discharge from the hospital
- It is anticipated that you attend physiotherapy at a clinic of your choice to progress your exercises and to ensure the proper return of function to the operative shoulder
- The frequency of your visits to physiotherapy will be determined by how well your range of motion of the shoulder is progressing and how well you are managing with the exercises at home

## Activities of Daily Living

### *Getting Dressed*

- When at home wear loose clothing such as button down shirts or loose t-shirts
- Dress the operated side first and undress it last



**Step 1** – Place shirt on your lap with the inside of your shirt facing you (label out), collar close to your stomach and tail of your shirt at your knees.



**Step 2** – Place operated arm into the sleeve that is directly in front of your bad arm. Make sure that the sleeve is pulled up past your elbow.



**Step 3** – Grasp collar of your shirt on the good side. Lean forward and bring your good arm over and behind your head to carry the shirt over to your good side.



**Step 4** – Put your good arm into the sleeve opening.



**Step 5** – To straighten the shirt, lean forward, bring your shirt down past your shoulders, reach back and pull tail down. Button as usual, making sure not to move bad arm away from your body.

- Women will need assistance with fastening their bra as you are not permitted to be place your hand behind your back

### *Toileting*

Getting on and off the toilet may be difficult since you cannot use your operated arm or hand to help you get up. You may consider:

- Using a commode over the toilet or a versa-frame can help in making getting on and off the toilet much easier. This will give you something sturdy to push up from when getting up. However, you can only use your good arm to push from



We do not recommend the use of a raised toilet seat with arms as these are designed to be used with both hands. There is the risk of the seat loosening and causing you to fall if used improperly.

### *Bathing*

- You may remove your sling for bathing once the sutures are removed
- Remember to keep you arm rested over your stomach and/or by your side
- You cannot use your operated arm while bathing
- You cannot use your operated arm for stability when getting in or out of the shower or bathtub

- To wash your underarm, gently move your arm out to the side. You may need assistance to do this

If you have a Bath Tub with a Shower:

- An adjustable height bath transfer bench can be used which will allow for easy and safe bathtub transfers
- This method allows you to sit on the bench and swing your legs over the edge of the tub



- You can sit during the bath on the bench or stand during your shower. Remember you should not use your operated hand or arm while bathe

If you have a Walk-in Shower:

- An adjustable height shower chair may make showing easier and decrease the risk of falling since you can sit
- You can sit in the chair and use your unaffected hand to bathe



Many patients will require assistance for bathing, dressing, and meal preparation when they return home. These needs should be taken into consideration and the necessary arrangements should be made to ensure they are addressed prior to your admission and discharge from the hospital.

London Health Sciences Centre does not rent any equipment items. Any equipment needed will have to be arranged by the patient through a local vendor of their choice.