

Occupational Therapy

Pre-Admit Shoulder Surgery Information

What should I expect after surgery?

- Be prepared to function using one hand after surgery. Your surgeon will provide certain restrictions for your operated shoulder that will challenge your ability to perform daily activities i.e. bathing, dressing, meal preparation, home management, etc.
- Support from family, friends, or neighbors will be of great assistance during your post-operative period. If a support system is limited, services such as in-home therapy, nursing, and personal support care may be available however they are **limited in supply** and will be assessed on an individual basis.
- In order to protect and immobilize your shoulder, you will be fit with a shoulder sling. Expect to wear this sling for **approximately 6 weeks, at all times.**

Precautions

- You will **not** be allowed to drive for approximately 6 weeks. Arrange for a ride to appointments/errands.
- You can use the hand on your operated side to perform light activities (less than 1 lb.), however you will need to avoid weight bearing/pushing/pulling.
- Various exercises will be allowed. These will be reviewed by your physiotherapist.

Tips for self care after surgery

Dressing and bathing may pose a challenge. Until directed by the surgeon, it is essential that you do not move your shoulder while performing activities of daily living.

Dressing:

- Wear **EXTRA** large, loose-fitting clothing, that will fit *overtop* of the sling
- Depending on the type of sling and your restrictions you may also wear the *sling overtop* of your clothes
- Some modify their clothing by cutting the seam and using velcro tabs/pins to allow easier dressing of the operated side
- Avoid clothing with small buttons, hooks and zippers
- Elastic waist pants and slip on shoes or elastic shoe laces are recommended
- A long shoe horn or a dressing hook may help extend your reach when dressing
- Most women avoid wearing a bra, and instead wear a tank/tube top for support

Bathing:

- Sit to sponge bathe. Avoid getting the incision/sling wet until further advised.
- If you are allowed to remove your sling for bathing, a second 'shower sling' will help to stabilize your shoulder while bathing.

CARING FOR THE BODY, MIND & SPIRIT SINCE 1869

Renowned for compassionate care, St. Joseph's is one of the best academic health care organizations in Canada dedicated to helping people live to their fullest by minimizing the effects of injury, disease and disability through excellence in care, teaching and research.



sjhc.london.on.ca

- Wash using your non-operated side. If help is available, have your partner clean under your operated arm by feeding a warm, soapy cloth into the underarm area. Grab it from the front and back and use a side to side motion to clean the underarm. **Dry the area thoroughly.**
- Avoid using deodorants/lotions/sprays on the operated side. Simply tuck a gauze pad/small cloth in the armpit to absorb perspiration if needed.
- Consider a bath chair/bench, non-slip bath mat, long-handled sponge, removable shower head, grab bar or a raised toilet seat (without armrests) to help you rise and lower from the toilet

Other Activities

- Pliers/BBQ tongs may be useful in tasks requiring extended reaching or pinching
- To cut vegetables/fruits, place new aluminum nails through a cutting board and place the vegetable on the nail to help stabilize it while you cut with your non-operated hand
- Use a position adjustable hair dryer that is mounted to the wall/counter top in order to free your non-operated hand to manage a brush
- Many choose to sleep in a reclining chair as this helps to elevate their shoulder and it is often easier to rise out of
- A variety of devices are available for one handed tasks such as jar openers, scrub brushes etc. *Ask your OT and they will assist you on where to rent/purchase these devices.*

What else will help me manage at home?

1. Organize → Arrange your cupboards so that frequently used items are at waist level and are within reach. It is unsafe to climb on stools, therefore lower items from high places.
2. Simplify → If able, prepare meals ahead of time and portion them into separate containers with lids that are easy to remove. Stock your freezer with frozen meals, buy precut vegetables, or collect take-out menus. You may also want to consider Meals on Wheels and grocery delivery services. Speak with your Occupational Therapist about these options.
3. Delegate → You may have to rely on family members, friends or neighbors to assist you with certain home management tasks. Cleaning your home, cutting your grass, doing your laundry and getting groceries prior to surgery is advised.