

# SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

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## Shoulder Arthroplasty

### What to Expect

- The following instructions will help guide you through your recovery. Separate instructions for therapy and exercises will be given and are available at [www.VanThielMD.com](http://www.VanThielMD.com).
- Dr. Van Thiel's PA (Physician Assistant) Carly Jackson will be closely involved in your care and recovery. A physician assistant is a licensed practitioner that has completed over 2 years of post-college medical training and has the credentials and expertise to treat patients independently.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Post-Operative Visit** – This will be between 10-14 days after the surgery. You will see Dr. Van Thiel and he will go through your pictures from surgery and answer any questions you have.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Post-Operative Visits** – Occur at 6 weeks and 3 months after surgery. During these visits you will be seen by Carly Jackson (Dr. Van Thiel's PA) to ensure that you are comfortable and meeting the recovery goals. Ms. Jackson is always in direct communication with Dr. Van Thiel and does have the medical expertise, training and credentials to help you along with your recovery.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Post-Operative Visit** – Occurs at 6 months after surgery. Dr. Van Thiel will discuss any questions that you have and ensure you are making a complete recovery.
- **Physical Therapy** – Physical therapy will begin after your first post-operative visit for a total shoulder replacement and after your 6 week visit for a reverse shoulder replacement.
- We will contact your insurance company to authorize your surgery, but we suggest that you

also contact your insurance company for further information and to verify coverage.

### Day of Surgery

- **Diet** – Do not eat anything after midnight the day of surgery.
- When you get to the hospital or surgery center Dr. Van Thiel will come speak with you and confirm the procedure and the side. Feel free to ask any questions.
- The anesthesiologist will also come speak with you. We routinely perform regional blocks for pain control during and after surgery. A regional block is a small injection that will numb the nerves at the operative site for up to 12-30 hours after surgery. These blocks are excellent for pain control.
- **After Surgery** – You will wake up in the recovery room and once you are comfortable and fully awake, the nurses will admit you to the floor for 1-2 days.

### *Post-Operative Care*

#### Diet

- Following surgery, nausea is very common. Begin with clear liquids and progress to your daily diet as tolerated.

#### Wound Management

- A bandage is applied to the operative site. Leave the bandage on until the first post-operative visit.
- It is normal for there to be drainage and for the dressing to become blood tinged
- Keep the dressing intact until post-op

appointment.

- Do not get the bandage wet until the first post-operative appointment. Use of a garbage or plastic bag over the shoulder is advised to keep the wound dry during showering. No baths or hot tubs!
- Sometimes small incisions are made that do not require suture closure. Please do not be alarmed by this.

### **Activity**

- Keep operative arm in the sling provided with the exception of showering.
- Sling will be worn for 6 weeks.
- You are encouraged to walk in a controlled environment in order to avoid prolonged sitting. Remove the arm from the sling daily and do pendulum exercises of the shoulder.
- Return to a physically demanding job will be discussed on your postoperative visit.
- You may take your arm out of the sling during the day to allow pendulums, the bending and straightening of your elbow, wrist and hand.
- No driving until instructed by your physician
- Sleeping may be performed in a reclining chair or bed with the use of pillows to support the operative site as tolerated.
- Return to a physically demanding job will be discussed on your postoperative visit.

### **Ice/Cryotherapy**

- An ice machine or ice packs will be provided and applied at the conclusion of your surgery.
- Use continuously for the first 72 hours postoperatively, then in 30 minute increments 4-5 times per day thereafter as tolerated.

### **Medications**

- Most patients require the use of narcotics for a period of time after surgery. Take as directed.
- If you received an interscalene nerve block, numbness and loss of function may persist for up to 24 hours postoperatively. You are encouraged to take your prescribed pain

medication as indicated on the bottle regardless of pain for the first 24 hours.

- Common side effects of pain medication: nausea, insomnia, itching, constipation, drowsiness, hallucinations.
- Take medications with food to reduce side effects
- Do not operate machinery or moving vehicles while taking the pain medication.
- Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil or Aleve may be taken as directed in addition to the pain medication to control symptoms

### **Emergencies**

- If at any time you have questions or emergent concerns contact Dr. Van Thiel or his physician assistant Carly Jackson, PA-C at (815-398-9491).
- If you are calling after hours or over a weekend you will be directed to the physician answering service and you may be called by the physician or physician assistant on call.
- Please call if any of the following arise:
  - Fever >101. (It is normal to have a low grade fever for the first 1-2 days after surgery)
  - Redness
  - Painful swelling
  - Numbness
  - Shortness of breath
  - Excessive bleeding and/or drainage from incision sites
  - If you require immediate attention, go to the nearest emergency room

### **Follow-up**

- A follow-up appointment will be set for 10 -14 days after the surgery. If you have questions or concerns about this date contact our scheduler at (815-381-7365) during normal office hours.
- Physical Therapy will begin after your first postoperative visit
- If you have additional questions or concerns most questions can be addressed by our Nursing staff (Jamie) by calling (815-381-7365).