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Preparing Yourself for Surgery

Recovery after shoulder surgery is a gradual process that can take a long time.

Plan for your return home **before** you enter the hospital.

- ask your family and friends if they can assist you after your surgery
- talk to your ACC case manager to see what ACC can offer in terms of help
- practice daily activities using the arm that will not be affected by surgery
- rearrange areas of your home (for example kitchen) to make it easier for yourself
- anticipate a temporary change in your activity after surgery

Before the Hospital

You will be sent in the mail questionnaires to complete for both the hospital and the anaesthetist. Please complete these with as much detail as possible (including current medications and past medical history) as these will help with your surgical planning. There will also be questionnaires to complete either by email or iPad at my rooms (Socrates) both before surgery as well as in the subsequent months. We are always trying to do better and patient reported outcome measures are very important in this regard to independently assess your outcome following surgery.

You will be contacted several days prior to your surgery to inform you when to come to the hospital and what to bring.

It is important that you do not eat or drink anything after the time you are told. Shower the night before surgery to decrease the amount of bacteria on your skin.

Try and get a good night's rest before surgery and avoid alcohol.

Do not wear makeup on the morning of surgery.

Take only the medications you are told to take on the morning of surgery.

At the Hospital

Once you arrive at the hospital the nursing staff will admit you and take your recordings (temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and an ECG).

You will be asked to empty your bladder and remove all jewelry from the arm to be operated on.

The affected arm may be scrubbed and shaved to prepare for surgery.

You will be seen by both the surgeon and the anaesthetist prior to surgery. They will discuss in detail what is going to happen and there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

An intravenous line may be started before surgery, and the anaesthetist may suggest that you receive a nerve block to help decrease pain after surgery.

After Surgery

When you wake up you will be in the recovery room.

Nurses and anaesthesia personnel will monitor your vital signs, alertness, pain level, and need for medications.

It is normal to receive oxygen through a face mask.

The average length of stay in the recovery room is generally one hour. Once you are ready an orderly and nurse will transfer you to your room on the ward.

Your affected arm will be in a shoulder immobilizer sling.

If you have had a nerve block you will be unable to move your arm until it wears off.

Do not attempt to use the affected shoulder until instructed by your surgeon.

It is normal to feel pain and discomfort after surgery. Please tell your nurse when you have pain so that pain medication can be given.

Tell your nurse if you experience any other symptoms, especially nausea.

Whilst in hospital the nursing staff will help you perform self-care activities.

You will learn how to care for yourself before you return home.

Before your discharge from hospital the surgeon will provide you with detailed information sheets and exercise sheets which will clearly outline how to look after your shoulder in the subsequent days and weeks.

You will also receive an appointment for your first follow-up visit.