

LANCASTER ORTHOPEDIC GROUP

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Total Shoulder Arthroplasty

What is a total shoulder arthroplasty?

A total shoulder arthroplasty (shoulder replacement) is a surgical procedure in which parts of an arthritic joint are replaced with a prosthesis or artificial parts. The normal shoulder is a ball and socket joint. The ball is called the humeral head and the socket is called the glenoid. A total shoulder arthroplasty removes the arthritic joint surfaces and replaces them with metal and plastic.

How do you replace the shoulder?

The prosthesis will be placed through an incision down the front of the shoulder. The socket is anchored in place with screws or cement while the ball component will be inserted in the humeral shaft.

Length of Stay

Most patients leave the hospital the same day of surgery. Some patients may spend one night in the hospital after this surgery for medical reasons. You will need to have someone to drive you home after you have been discharged.

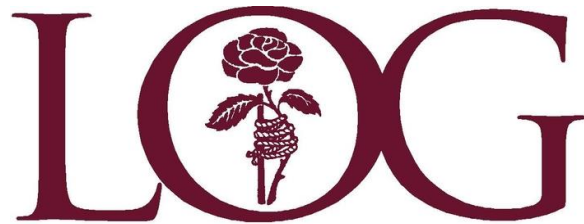
Anesthesia

Patients usually have two types of anesthesia for this surgery. The first is general anesthesia, which means you are asleep. A local anesthetic is typically injected at the time of surgery and a nerve block is not often necessary.

The second type of anesthesia is a nerve block. For patients who cannot receive the local anesthetic due to medical reasons or drug allergies, a nerve block is an option. Your arm will be numb and will feel very strange. The nerve block will last about 12-14 hours. The anesthesiologist will speak to you on the day of surgery. The ultimate choice of anesthesia technique is up to you and your anesthesiologist.

Incision

You will have an incision down the front of your shoulder. After the incision has healed, it is usually very thin and not very noticeable.



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Pain

While admitted to the hospital you will be provided with pain medications by mouth that will help with the surgical pain. You will also have pain medication prescribed for when you are discharged home.

Sling

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. This will stay in place until you are seen for your first post-operative visit, at which point it will be discontinued. During the first two weeks, you can remove your sling to shower, get dressed, and to do elbow/wrist/hand exercises.

Dressings

You will go home with tape dressings. Do not take it off, it will be removed at your first visit. You may shower right after surgery. Dry the incision immediately after showering.

Restrictions

Recovery from a total shoulder replacement is six months. During that time, you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm. You may drive when your sling is removed, and you can safely control your vehicle.

Work and activity restrictions are consistent after total shoulder replacement:

- 0 - 2 weeks: No work, no use of operative hand
- 2-6 weeks: Discontinue sling, begin formal physical therapy
- 6 weeks - 3 months: Nothing in operative hand heavier than a fork/knife/toothbrush. Cleared to return to work for opposite hand work only
- 3 months: No lifting greater than 10 pounds, only occasional overhead reaching
- 4 months: No lifting greater than 20 pounds. No lifting greater than 10 pounds repetitively
- 5 months: No lifting greater than 30 pounds.
- >6 months: No restrictions