Shoulder Joint Replacement
Care After Surgery

A rehabilitation program is important to the success of the operation. If the surgery is scheduled for the morning, therapy may begin later that day. It is seldom later than the first day following the operation. A physical therapist will start gentle range of motion exercises. During these your arm is put through all its motions. Before you leave the hospital (usually two or three days after surgery), your therapist will show you in how to use a pulley device to help bend and extend your arm.

Please read the instructions outlined below. Refer to these instructions for the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after surgery. Your surgeon may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your surgeon.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or allowed.
- Wear the sling every night for at least the first month, or as instructed by your surgeon.
- **Do not** use your arm to push yourself up in bed or from a chair. This requires too much muscle.
- Follow the program of home exercises suggested. Do the exercises 4 to 5 times a day for a month or as directed.
- Try not to overuse your shoulder. It is easy to do if this is the first time you have been pain free in a long time. Early overuse of the shoulder may result in later problems.
- **Do not** lift anything heavier than a cup of coffee for the first 6 weeks after surgery.
- Ask for help. Your caregiver may be able to suggest a clinic or agency for this if you do not have home support.
- **Do not** participate in contact sports or do any heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds) for at least 6 months, or as directed.
- Keep ice packs (a bag of ice wrapped in a towel) on the surgical area for 20 minutes, 4 times per day, for the first 2 days following surgery.
- Change dressings if necessary or as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- **Follow the directions of your surgeon.**
- Keep appointments as directed.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 100° F (37.8° C) develops.
- A bad (*foul*) smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- A breaking open of the *wound* (edges not staying together) after sutures or staples have been removed.
- You develop increasing pain with movement of the shoulder.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have a hard time breathing
- You develop any reaction or side effects to medications given.

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