

## TIPS AFTER SHOULDER SURGERY FOR INDEPENDENT ADULTS LIVING ALONE

We had a few requests from patients to compile tips to make life easier after a shoulder surgery. The following is a combined effort from patients who have been through it, as well as our team's input. Hope you find it helpful! Feel free to share with us what made your life easier. Keep in mind the following are suggestions, not requirements for you at home.

### **Prior to surgery: The preparation**

- Practice with the sling, taking it on and off and adjusting. Prepare for the fact that you'll need to use the sling for up to 6 weeks after surgery. Please watch the "arc sling" video at [www.fvortho.com/sling](http://www.fvortho.com/sling)
- Practice doing daily activities with your non-surgical arm including getting dressed and bathing

### **First week after surgery**

- Have 24/7 support for the first 5-7 days. From having help refilling the ice cooler to making sure you're staying on top of the pain with the narcotic pill schedule, having a friend or family member at your home is very beneficial

### **What CAN I do with my surgical arm? It is my dominant arm**

- You may remove your sling a few times/day to take a break. During this time, gentle elbow and wrist motion is ok (try not to full lock the elbow out straight)
- When you are comfortable trying (usually after 1 week), you may use the operative arm to eat and brush your teeth. Be careful not to reach forward with the shoulder, but use the elbow and wrist to bring the food or toothbrush to your mouth
- With the sling on or off, you may hold an object such as a small plate or light-weight coffee cup near your body

### **Clothing, shoes and hygiene**

- Make sure you have plenty of button up or snap up shirts (or oversized shirts) to make dressing easier. Tank tops or any shirt that easily goes over the head is recommended
- You will not be able to tie your shoes, so slip on shoes or slippers would be best
- Socks are difficult to put on due to the elastic
- Pants cannot be unzipped or unbuttoned easily with one hand; elastic waist recommended
- Ladies** may want to invest in a front closure bra or simply go without one!
- Use a floss sword to floss teeth as regular floss requires both hands

### **Eating/cooking & clean up**

- Use of a knife is nearly impossible
- You should eat food that can be consumed by using a fork, spoon or your fingers
- Use dishwasher to wash dishes. Try not to use pots/pans unless they go into the dishwasher

**Ice machine**

-This is very valuable. Use the ice machine as much as possible for at least the first 72 hours. After this time, we still recommend using the ice machine 3 times daily.

-Make sure you have a stock supply of bags of ice prior to surgery. Have a least 4 bags on site, you don't want to run out during the first couple of days.

**Walking your dog-** You may not have the energy the first week. A tie-out may be handy if you have a yard. Or better yet, hire a dog walker :)