

REVERSE TOTAL SHOULDER ARTHROPLASY

What Can I Expect?

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What is a Reverse Ball and Socket Arthroplasty (aka Reverse Shoulder)?

A reverse ball and socket 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. The reverse ball and socket replacement changes the orientation of the shoulder so that the normal socket (glenoid) now is replaced with an artificial ball, and the normal ball (humeral head) is replaced with an implant that has a socket into which the artificial ball rests. This special type of replacement is designed for patient who had shoulder arthritis along with a non-repairable rotator cuff tear and sometimes for patients with bad fractures of the proximal humerus.

How do you replace the shoulder?

The prosthesis will be placed through an incision down the front of the shoulder. The ball component is anchored in place with screws while the socket is typically press fit securely into the center of the humerus

Length of Stay

Typically, you will spend 1-2 nights in the hospital after this surgery. 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 and unaware during the surgery. The second type of anesthesia is a nerve block which numbs the operative arm. The nerve block will last about 12-18 hours and during this period you will not be able to control your arm and it will feel strange to you. The anesthesiologist will speak to you on the day of surgery. The ultimate choice of anesthesia technique is up to you and your anesthesiologist and any other medical risk factors that you may have.

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.

Pain

All surgical procedures are associated with some discomfort and all patients perceive pain differently. In general, the pain associated with this procedure is well controlled with the pain medication that will be prescribed for you prior to discharge. After the nerve block wears off you will have discomfort which was not present initially after the surgery. Taking your pain medications as prescribed will help to ease this pain.

Sling

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. You should remain in your sling until you are seen for your first post-operative appointment.

Dressings

You will typically go home with a clear dressing across the front of your shoulder. This dressing is waterproof and you can shower immediately after the surgery. Leave the clear dressing in place until your follow-up appointment. Most of the time we are able to use dissolvable stitches so that none will need to be removed at your post-operative visit.

Blood Thinners

Typically, we ask that you take aspirin for a brief period of time (2 weeks) following the surgery to help prevent blood clots. While blood clots are not common following shoulder surgery, they can have serious side effects. If you have a history of blood clots, stronger blood thinners may be prescribed.

Restrictions

Recovery from a reverse ball and socket shoulder replacement is a minimum of three months although different patients recover at different rate. During that time you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm. You may drive when you feel that you can properly control a car and you are **NOT** taking narcotic pain medication.

First 6 weeks: No lifting no closing doors, no reaching behind your back, and no repetitive movements

1.5-3 months: No lifting > 10 lbs

Long-Term: Repetitive heavy lifting or impact is discouraged