

Outpatient surgery FAQ: Post-op Expectations

The post-operative course associated with outpatient surgery can vary depending on the type of surgery you have. Outpatient surgery includes, but isn't limited to: fracture surgery, shoulder arthroscopy (rotator cuff repair, labral surgery), along with a wide variety of hand and upper extremity surgeries. Just as every surgery has its unique elements, every post-operative care plan can be unique to the individual patient and their needs during recovery. For outpatient surgery, recovery starts with the patient being able to return to the comfort of their own home on the same day.

- **After Anesthesia Wears Off**

Initially you will be monitored one-on-one by the Post -Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) staff. If general anesthesia was used for your procedure, you will be monitored closely in PACU for some time prior to having visitors. You will spend some time in recovery before you're ready to be discharged home. Whether you are having wide awake surgery or extensive reconstructive surgery, the staff is well equipped to best support you.

- [Types of Anesthesia](#)

- **Controlling Surgical Pain While Recovering**

Pain management after surgery can be different depending on the procedure and the patient. Each patient experiences post-operative pain in a unique way. Being pain free should not be your expectation. Your surgeon and their team will develop a post-operative plan to address pain management specific to you.

One of the most important steps in pain management after surgery is addressing pain with a multimodal (more than one) approach. Pain medication is only one part of the post-operative care plan. Patients need to also use modalities (ice, heat, compression, ultrasound, etc) and adhere to the recommendations in discharge regarding restrictions and activity modification.

Pain is typically treated with NSAIDs (ibuprofen or naproxen), Tylenol (Acetaminophen), and occasionally a shortcourse of narcotic medication. Multiple studies continue to show the superior benefits of Tylenol and ibuprofen after orthopedic surgery, as opposed to just narcotic pain medication.

- [Pain Management After Orthopedic Surgery](#)

- **Going Home After Surgery**

It is our goal to get you scheduled for surgery promptly and then back home the same day of surgery. The medical staff will provide a list of discharge instructions specific to the patient's surgery, including specific instructions about wound care and weightbearing status and signs/symptoms to keep an eye out for. The staff will be an important resource in answering patient specific questions after surgery. Finally, upon discharge, you will be released to a family member or friend to take you home.

Activity at Home After Surgery

The level of activity permitted varies widely with the procedure performed. This will be specifically discussed in your “post-op” instructions which will be provided to you. Some surgeries are accompanied by a very formal recovery protocol including physical therapy, activity restrictions, dressing changes, and bracing. Other instructions will be more so based on what you as a patient feel you are ready to attempt. Your surgical team will prepare you for this time and what it entails. In addition, can provide you with important resources such as literature and websites to make daily activities easier while you are recovering from surgery. Please reference the links below, and discuss them with your surgeon prior to surgery to help you further prepare for success after your surgery.

- [Cast and Splint care](#)
- [Carpal Tunnel Exercises](#)