

A TO Z OF HINTS AND TIPS

A AMAZON – sells just about everything....

ANTICIPATION - if you are overly nervous, can't sleep, etc. anticipating surgery – talk to your PCP and see if anti-anxiety or other medicines could help.

B BATHROOM – look at bathroom carefully. Would a temporary grab handle help get in and out of shower/bath? Do you need an additional non-slip mat in shower?

BEDDING – duvets and comforters can be heavy. Would you be better with a sheet plus a light fleece blanket? If using a recliner cot-sized mattress pads and fitted sheets are available and make it feel a lot cozier – check the dimensions before ordering.

C CLOTHING – easy to put on and take off – items that button or snap in front are great! Cloak or cape for a coat if winter.

D DENTIST – have a dental check up to ensure no loose fillings or crowns – after surgery I was told to wait 8-9 months before regular dental procedures.

DENTAL FLOSS – can't do it one-handed – use tiny dental brushes or floss sticks

E EARRINGS – loop ear-rings (studs won't work).

EATING – learn to use cutlery with your 'other' hand. ...in fact try to learn to do everything with your non-affected hand.

EXERCISE – follow instructions from physio (Physical Therapist) - don't over-do it!

EYELASH and eyebrow tint – if this is something you do, then do it before surgery.

F FRONT-FASTENING BRA – no explanation needed!

G GETTING UP – practice getting out of a chair and out of bed using your "good" hand or not using any hand at all.

H HAIR – consider getting hair cut short – if you can bear it... or use a hairband. If you color your hair, do it before surgery.

I ICE – Ice, Ice, Baby – before and a lot after op. ICE BAND (or Polar Cubes) – can be purchased from several online retailers or may be purchased by the surgeon. Insurance may not cover it, but it's invaluable! You can use frozen 4oz or 8 oz. bottles instead of ice cubes – it makes it last longer. Keep a "back-up" set in the freezer so you can constantly have a frozen ice source in the machine as needed. Also if the machine does not have an on/off switch, consider plugging it into an easily accessible, dedicated power strip that can be turned on/off when changing the frozen bottles and water.

- J **JOGGING BOTTOMS** – elasticated waist or size bigger – **loose fitting**.
- K **KITCHEN** – use pre-prepared **or frozen** vegetables **or meals** from supermarket. **If food or meals can be delivered – use this option also.**
- L **LEARN** – to do tasks with the opposite hand, especially if surgery is on dominant shoulder.
- M **MEDICATION** – if you are taking regular medication, put enough into containers for at least two or three weeks to avoid having to push pills out of foil packets. **Check with your PCP and the surgeon's office as to when/or if to stop any medications or supplements.** **Only if there are no children in the house, consider leaving the tops of containers loose – it's impossible to open a child-proof container with only one hand.**

MOISTERIZE – skin on shoulder to ensure that skin is not too dry, and lower legs which will get very dry whilst wearing the surgical stockings **if required for any length of time.** **Check with the surgeon as to applying any moisturizer on the scar after it is healed.** Also a travel size container that flips open is easier to hold and open than a larger one with a screw-type lid.
- N **NIGHTWEAR** – needs to be considered as you will be wearing the sling in bed at night so I advise that you wear a nightshirt (or pyjamas -**pajamas**) with a collar to stop it rubbing your neck, button-up will be easier for the first week or so.

NIGHT LIGHTS - light sensitive nightlights avoid any dangerous stumbling in the middle of the night.
- O **OUTDOORS** – wear sling for the first few weeks until you are advised that it is no longer needed; take care travelling on buses **or public transportation** – check with the surgeon's office as to **how long to wear the sling.**
- P **PILLOWS** – a soft pillow vertically on operated side to rest shoulder/elbow in sling and ensure you don't turn onto the shoulder during sleep – **a recliner might be much better....but fair warning! – I never could get comfortable!**
- PRACTICE** – all tasks normally done with other hand at least four weeks before operation e.g. wiping 'important little places', putting on lipstick, brushing teeth and drinking cups of coffee. **Also pay attention to those tasks that require two hands – i.e. dental floss – and create ways to do it one-handed.**
- Q **QUESTIONS** – don't be afraid to ask questions, physio (**surgeon, physical therapists**) consultant or any other medical staff.
- R **ROTOR CUFF** – this is very fragile, beware of sudden sharp movements.
- REACHER/GRABBER TOOL** makes it easier to pick up items.

S **SHIRTS** – which button up the front, are great for the first couple of weeks when you may find it difficult to get dressed.

SHOES – slip on shoes or boots with zips (zippers) are much easier than laces.

SHOULDER PULLEY – **If prescribed by your physical therapist** - use for exercise post op and can be purchased from Amazon.

SHOWER – consider a shower cape, wound dressings are waterproof but additional protection might be considered. **Use a hand towel to dry – larger bath towels are heavy.**

SKIRTS – may be easier to wear instead of trousers (toilet visits).

STAIRS – practice going up and down the stairs using only one arm – handrail will be on the wrong side at some point.

T **TRAVELLING** – in car: use a small hand towel (**or removable padded strap**) under seat belt if it has to go over the operated shoulder – or sit in the back of the car on the opposite side. **If** on a plane or train, consider hand luggage with wheels...if anything needs to go in the overhead compartment, get help!

TOOTHPASTE – buy some with a flip top – much easier than having to screw top off.

U **UNDERWEAR** almost impossible to wear without help, go bare if you dare!

USELESS and UPSET – is how you may feel, its expected and its temporary – **rely on and appreciate any caregivers you may have!**

V **VANITY** – no chance, you will look and feel like a ragamuffin for at least a couple of weeks.

W **WELL DONE** – congratulate yourself on achieving every small milestone, you will feel better.

WIPES – face wipes, deodorant wipes and toilet wipes – very handy.

X **X-RAYS** – if you are curious, ask to see your before and after x-ray's when you attend your post op out-patients' appointment.

Y **YOU** – will be tired, frustrated and grumpy – live with it, it won't be for long.

Z **ZZZ** – some people find it easier to sleep in a reclining chair in the early days' post op. If sleeping in bed as normal, more pillows may be required, especially under the operated shoulder.