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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SHOULDER SURGERY

Q: *When should I start Physical Therapy?*

A: Formal physical therapy will begin when Dr. Galdi decides. Therapy usually begins 3-6 weeks following surgery. Typically patients begin working with a therapist 2 weeks after joint replacement surgery and 4 weeks after arthroscopic shoulder surgery.

Q: *When should I stop cryotherapy?*

A: When you do not have any pain, inflammation or swelling. After exercising or returning to activity, you may develop pain and inflammation, in this case, cryotherapy should be utilized immediately. Even when you do not have any immediate symptoms, you may utilize cryotherapy preventively to avoid any residual symptoms. Use for 3-7 days, 3-5 times per day for 30 minutes to 1 hour each session.

Q: *How long must I wear the sling?*

A: This will depend on the type of surgical procedure. Generally, after having arthroscopic shoulder surgery or total joint replacement the period can range from 2 to 6 weeks. Ultimately, this will be decided by Dr. Galdi and may be determined by the extent of the procedure that has been done.

Q: *What if I think I have re-injured my shoulder?*

A: Do not wait to see if it will heal itself. You may call Dr. Galdi's office right away. You may need to schedule an evaluation.

Q: *When can I return to sport-specific activities?*

A: This will be decided by Dr. Galdi. The type of surgical procedure will be a factor in this decision. Other factors that may be evaluated are normal range of motion and flexibility; normal strength; and lack of symptoms. Usually sport specific activities will be allowed around 4 to 6 months depending on the type of surgery and injury.

Q: *When can I have dental procedures done following joint replacement?*

A: Generally 2 months after a Total Shoulder Replacement or Reverse Shoulder Replacement you can have dental work done. Antibiotics must be taken prior to any dental procedures.

Q: *When will my first post-operative appointment be?*

A: Your first office visit will be approximately 7-14 days after your surgery. Dr. Galdi will inform you on how often you will return for follow-up appointments.

Q: *When can I start driving after surgery?*

A: Generally, 2-4 weeks after your surgery or when you are no longer in a sling or taking any narcotic medicine.

Q: *How long do artificial joints last?*

A: On average, artificial joints have a lifespan of 10-20 years. If you are in your 40-50 years old when you have your joint replacement surgery, especially if you live an active lifestyle, you are likely to need another joint replacement surgery later in life.

Q: *When can I return to work after surgery?*

A: This depends on the type of surgery you had, and the type of work you do (sedentary/desk job, versus physically demanding active work). It is very important to discuss with Dr. Galdi before surgery.

Q: *What is arthroscopy?*

A: Arthroscopy is a minimally invasive surgical technique that utilizes a fiber optic camera, called an “arthroscope” to allow a surgeon to view an affected joint without requiring a large incision.

Q: *What is a Total Joint Replacement?*

A: Total Joint Replacement procedure involves the complete removal of a damaged or arthritic joint, and its replacement with an artificial joint implant, called a prosthesis. Commonly replaced joints include the shoulder, hip and knee. Total Joint Replacements are typically recommended when non-surgical treatment methods such as physical therapy, cortisone injections, and medication, fail to alleviate joint pain and improve range of motion and strength.

Q: *What should I wear to my surgery?*

A: You should plan to wear loose, comfortable clothing and supportive, stable shoes.

Q: *Will I set off a metal detector with my joint replacement?*

A: Shoulder replacements do contain metal so this is a possibility, but it depends on the sensitivity of the detector and the amount of other metal in your body. We do not provide cards stating that you have a joint replacement since these are not accepted by the TSA.