

Reverse Shoulder Replacement — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Proximal Humerus Fracture (Broken Upper Arm Bone at the Shoulder) — Reverse Shoulder Arthroplasty

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

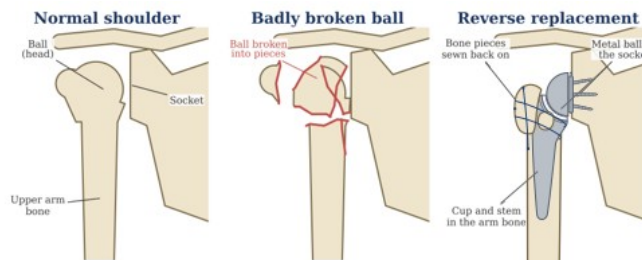
The **proximal humerus** is the top of the upper arm bone—the ball of the shoulder and the bumps (**tuberosities**) where the rotator cuff attaches. In some fractures, especially in older adults or when the bone is in many pieces, the ball cannot be reliably fixed and may lose its blood supply.

The surgery

The broken ball is replaced through an incision at the front of the shoulder. In a **reverse** replacement, a metal ball is fixed to the socket and a cup on a stem goes into the arm bone, so the large deltoid muscle can lift the arm. The tuberosity pieces are usually sewn back around the implant. The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: Most patients have reliable pain relief and can lift the arm for daily activities. **Risks** are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, dislocation, the tuberosity pieces not healing (which can limit rotation), loosening of the implants over time, fracture around the implant, injury to nearby structures (such as nerves or blood vessels), stiffness, persistent pain, implant dislocation, and the need for further surgery. These will be reviewed with you in detail before surgery.



Proximal humerus fracture and reverse shoulder replacement (illustration)

Before Surgery

- **Medications:** We will tell you what to stop and when (e.g., blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, some supplements, weight-loss injections).
- **Fasting:** Follow the instructions from your surgery coordinator/facility. In general, you should have nothing to eat or drink starting at midnight the night before surgery.
- **Nicotine:** Stop all nicotine products—they slow healing.
- **Equipment:** A sling is typically provided at or before surgery.
- **Physical therapy:** Schedule your first visit for within about a week after surgery.
- **Home:** Plan for a helper at first; a recliner can make sleep easier.
- **Medical history:** Let us know if you or anyone in your family has a history of blood clot disorders or a malignant hyperthermia reaction to anesthesia.
- **Health:** Call us if you develop a fever, illness, or skin problem near the shoulder.

Day of Surgery

- If instructed, take blood pressure/heart medications with a small sip of water.
- Arrive at the time given by your surgery coordinator.
- Bring your medication list, insurance card, photo ID, and sling if you have them.
- Wear a loose, button-front shirt; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- A responsible adult must drive you home. You may **not** drive yourself.

Immediately After Surgery

- You will recover in the recovery area; many patients stay in the hospital for one or more nights.
- Your surgeon will discuss the procedure with you and your support person.
- Your care team will review wound care, restrictions, medications, follow-up, and warning signs before discharge.

Milestone	What to Expect After Surgery (General Timeline)
Sling	Weaned by 4-6 weeks (sling worn full if the bone pieces need extra protection). Gentle assisted motion starts right away.
Daily life	Generally return to desk work within first two weeks. Light tasks below shoulder height, lifting 1–2 lb. For 6 weeks: no pushing up from a chair and no reaching behind your back. No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Lifting & overhead	Active motion and lifting up to 5 lb from 6 weeks; up to 10 lb at 3 months. Most can reach overhead to a useful degree; rotation may stay limited.
Activity	Light recreation (swimming, golf) between 4 and 6 months. Heavy lifting is avoided long term.
► Please note: This is a general guide only. Detailed post-operative instructions will be provided on the day of surgery, and your restrictions and timeline may change based on the findings and procedures performed.	

Learn More

We **strongly recommend** reading these pages from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (OrthoInfo) before your surgery:

- **Your condition: Shoulder Trauma (Fractures and Dislocations)** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/diseases--conditions/shoulder-trauma-fractures-and-dislocations/>
- **Your procedure: Reverse Total Shoulder Replacement** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/treatment/reverse-total-shoulder-replacement/>

Video: You may find a video demonstrating an example (not the exact technique) of your surgery at <https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/activity/2009525-upper-arm-bone-fractures-proximal-humerus-fractures> (or browse <https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/catalog>).