

Shoulder Replacement Surgery

Why Might You Need Shoulder Replacement Surgery?

Shoulder replacement surgery, also known as shoulder arthroplasty, may be recommended for individuals with severe shoulder pain, stiffness, instability, or functional limitations that do not respond to conservative treatments such as medications, physical therapy, or injections. Common indications for shoulder replacement surgery include:

- Osteoarthritis: Degenerative changes in the shoulder joint cartilage due to wear and tear over time.
- Rheumatoid arthritis: Inflammatory autoimmune disorder affecting the shoulder joint.
- Rotator cuff arthropathy: Degeneration of the rotator cuff muscles and tendons, leading to shoulder instability and pain.
- Post-traumatic arthritis: Joint damage and pain resulting from a previous shoulder injury or fracture.
- Avascular necrosis: Loss of blood supply to the shoulder joint, causing bone death and deterioration.

What Does Surgery Involve?

During shoulder replacement surgery, the following steps typically occur:

- Anaesthesia: You will be placed under general anaesthesia or regional anaesthesia to ensure you are comfortable and pain-free throughout the procedure.
- Incision: A surgical incision is made over the shoulder joint, providing access to the damaged joint surfaces.
- Bone preparation: The arthritic or damaged portions of the shoulder joint, including the humeral head and glenoid socket, are removed and prepared to receive the prosthetic components.
- Implantation: The artificial shoulder components, including the metal ball (humeral head) and plastic socket (glenoid component), are secured in place with bone cement or press-fit techniques.
- Closure: The incision is closed with sutures or staples, and a sterile dressing is applied to the surgical site.

How To Prepare For Surgery?

Preparing for shoulder replacement surgery involves several steps, including:

- Consultation with a healthcare provider: Discuss your medical history, symptoms, treatment options, and expectations for surgery.
- Preoperative evaluations: Undergoing medical clearance, laboratory tests, imaging studies, and other assessments to ensure you are a suitable candidate for surgery.
- Medication management: Adjust medications, supplements, or herbal remedies as directed by your healthcare provider to minimise the risk of complications during surgery.
- Lifestyle modifications: Making necessary arrangements for postoperative care, transportation,

home modifications, and assistance with activities of daily living during the recovery period.

- Preoperative education: Learning about the procedure, potential risks and benefits, expected outcomes, and postoperative rehabilitation protocols to prepare mentally and physically for surgery.

What Are The Potential Risk Factors And Complications?

While shoulder replacement surgery is generally safe and effective, potential risks and complications may include:

- Infection at the surgical site.
- Bleeding or blood clots.
- Nerve or blood vessel injury.
- Dislocation or instability of the shoulder joint.
- Implant failure or loosening.
- Persistent pain or stiffness.
- Delayed healing or nonunion of the bone.
- Adverse reactions to anaesthesia or surgical complications.

What Does The Recovery Process Involve?

Recovery from shoulder replacement surgery involves several phases, including:

- Immediate postoperative care: You will be monitored in the recovery area until you are stable and alert, and your vital signs are within normal limits.
- Pain management: Pain medications, ice packs, or nerve blocks may be used to alleviate postoperative pain and discomfort.
- Rehabilitation: Physical therapy or rehabilitation exercises are initiated to restore shoulder function, strength, and range of motion gradually.
- Hospital stay: Most individuals remain in the hospital for 1-2 days following surgery to receive postoperative care, monitor for complications, and begin rehabilitation.
- Home recovery: You will be discharged home with instructions for wound care, activity restrictions, pain management, and follow-up appointments with your healthcare provider.