

We hope to make your hospital stay as comfortable as possible following your shoulder surgery.

This brochure aims to provide you with information about what to expect in hospital and tips on caring for your shoulder after your surgery.

Most patients having shoulder surgery go home after their surgery.

Inpatient rehabilitation is not usually recommended or required as the general principles for managing your shoulder will initially be rest and gentle exercise, not active rehabilitation.

You may need some support at home as your shoulder and arm will be immobilised for a period of time – sometimes up to four weeks.

If you believe you will have problems going home, please speak with the Preadmission Clinic on **(03) 9411 7358** as soon as possible before coming into hospital and they will put you in touch with the Discharge Coordinators or Social Work Department.

We also recommend watching our *Before You Arrive* and *During your Stay* videos that are located on our website: [www.svpm.org.au](http://www.svpm.org.au) – click on 'Your Visit' and then 'Before you Arrive' or 'During your Visit.'

Both videos give preadmission information and then information about your safety whilst you are in hospital.

### Important information

Contact your Surgeon if you have any concerns such as:

- Excessive bleeding / discharge from the wound
- Excessive pain – that is unrelieved by pain relief.
- Signs of a fever – temperature, shivers or feeling generally unwell
- Excessive swelling, heat or redness around your wound.

You should be given a post-operative appointment with your Surgeon prior to your discharge.

If you have any concerns before your admission please call the Preadmission Clinic on (03) 9411 7358.

If you have any concerns following your discharge, contact your Surgeon's rooms or the Discharge Coordinators from the hospital you were discharged:

Fitzroy (03) 9411 7479  
East Melbourne (03) 9928 6244  
Kew (03) 9851 8885



*Developed in consultation with our patients*

#### St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy

59 Victoria Parade Fitzroy Vic 3065  
Phone: (03) 9411 7111 Facsimile: (03) 9419 6582

#### St Vincent's Private Hospital East Melbourne

159 Grey Street East Melbourne Vic 3002  
Phone: (03) 9928 6555 Facsimile: (03) 9928 6444

#### St Vincent's Private Hospital Kew

5 Studley Avenue Kew Vic 3101  
Phone: (03) 9851 8888 Facsimile: (03) 9853 1415

[www.svpm.org.au](http://www.svpm.org.au)

ACN 083 645 505



**ST VINCENT'S  
HEALTH AUSTRALIA**

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES



## Shoulder Surgery Patient information



**ST VINCENT'S  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL  
MELBOURNE**

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

## Physiotherapy visit in Hospital

As part of your recovery from your shoulder surgery, you will be seen by a Physiotherapist who will teach you specific exercises based on your Surgeon's orders. The Physiotherapist will also provide you with an instruction sheet to take home.

## Pain Relief

It is important to take pain relief medication in hospital and also when you go home. Your Surgeon or Anaesthetist will prescribe medications for you and a Pharmacist will either discuss your medications or provide you with a handout on pain relief medications. If you have any concerns, please talk to your Nurse.

It is also important to take pain relief before going to bed as your sleep pattern may be altered for a while after you go home until your shoulder heals.

Other methods of pain relief include ice packs. An ice pack applied to your shoulder for 15 minutes is an excellent way of reducing pain and inflammation.

## Positioning

When sitting or lying make sure your operated shoulder and arm is supported by pillows.

## Exercise

It is important to do your exercises as instructed. The type of exercises you will need to do will be based on the exact type of surgery. Again, it is important to maintain good pain relief. Remember your general fitness is important so walk regularly.

## Immobilisation

Depending on your surgery, you may or may not be required to wear a sling for up to a few weeks. This can make your normal activities of daily living difficult. Where possible, prepare and practice as much as possible before your admission. We have prepared some tips that may help you during this time.

## Occupational Therapy – Activities of Daily Living

### Domestic Tasks

You may be able to manage light domestic tasks one handed but you should avoid heavy household duties.

- No pushing or pulling with your operated arm.
- Use ready prepared meals or items that need little preparation e.g. pre-chopped vegetables.
- It is also a good idea to prepare and freeze meals before your admission.

The hospital Discharge Coordinators can also give you information about Meal Services so if you feel you will need help accessing a service like this, request to see one of the Coordinators.

### Eating

After your surgery you may only be able to feed yourself with your hand on your 'un-operated' side as you will be required to wear your sling at all times and for a few weeks as per your Surgeon's instructions.

There are a number of one handed feeding aids available to be purchased online or through equipment suppliers. We are happy to provide these details when you are in hospital. Please ask your Nurse to contact the Occupational Therapy department.

### Clothing – dressing and undressing

- Always dress your operated arm first and undress it last.
- Loose clothing is the easiest to put on and take off.
- Loose T-shirts or shirts with buttons that you don't need to undo are preferable.
- Avoid clothing with small buttons, zips or hooks.
- Ladies may prefer to wear strapless, pull on or front fastening bras.
- If your arm is immobile, remember to dry well under your arm before dressing.

### Footwear

Slip on shoes or shoes with Velcro are the easiest to put on and take off when you are only able to use one hand.

Make sure the slip on shoes are a good fit and not likely to slip off as these will be a trip hazard.

Elastic shoe laces are also a good idea for lace up shoes.

### Personal Care

You may feel a little weak during the first few days and tire easily in the first few weeks after your surgery.

Try not to stand for too long and avoid overly hot showers. A shower stool or chair can be useful in the first couple of weeks.

Gathering your clothes / toiletries before you shower or wash can help to prevent getting overly tired.

If you are having a sponge bath, ask a family member to empty the bowl as you will not be able to lift it.

If your shower is over the bath it may preferable to sit on a bath board for the first couple of weeks.

If you feel you will need any equipment to assist you at home, your Nurse can contact the Occupational Therapist.

### Equipment Suppliers

There are a number of equipment suppliers with both online and equipment stores in Melbourne where equipment may be either bought or hired.

We are happy to provide you with a number of options on request, but for your convenience, one current supplier is listed below:

#### Rehab Hire

**310-314 Lorimer Street Port Melbourne Vic 3201**

**Phone: (03) 9646 7200**

**[www.rehabhire.com.au](http://www.rehabhire.com.au)**

### Driving

You should not attempt to drive until you are out of your sling, your pain has subsided and you feel confident, this is usually six weeks.

Please speak with your Surgeon for further advice.

It is important to remember that driving before getting medical clearance may affect your insurance.