

Why You Shouldn't Ignore Shoulder Pain:

A Surgeon and a Patient's Point of View

Shoulder pain can go beyond uncomfortable to debilitating - limiting your range of motion and keeping you from daily activities. And taking action when it means you may have to have surgery can be overwhelming.

At Bayfront Health Punta Gorda's Joint and Spine Center, their joint replacement program is designed to make the journey a little easier. Their skilled orthopedic team will see you through every phase of care, from pre-op education through your last inpatient therapy session. And, you'll experience it all in a small group setting with people just like you. Together, you'll share successes and concerns as you start to feel and move better.

We caught up with one well-respected surgeon, Robert P. Stchur, M.D., board-certified orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine physician, who is aptly known as "The Shoulder Guy," to shed light on traditional shoulder replacement surgery and reverse shoulder replacement. He is an active member of the Bayfront Health Punta Gorda medical staff and Joint and Spine Center orthopedic team.



Robert P. Stchur, MD, originally from Michigan, earned his medical degree, with honors, from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit and completed his residency at the University of Michigan. Dr. Stchur also pursued a sports medicine fellowship at the Lake Tahoe Sports Medicine Program. He specializes in arthroscopic shoulder surgery (minimally invasive) and shoulder replacement. Dr. Stchur serves as a team orthopedic consultant for the Tampa Bay Rays and team orthopedic surgeon for the Charlotte Stone Crabs, and he is a member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America. He regularly performs over 700 shoulder surgeries a year.

Q: What are the primary reasons a patient needs shoulder replacement surgery?

A: The most common reasons for shoulder replacement surgery are due to arthritis and rotator cuff tears. Age-related degeneration of the joint and rotator cuff is a common issue. When individuals let the damage linger without seeking treatment, secondary arthritis develops, causing even more degeneration, limited range-of-motion, and a great deal of pain. Last year, I performed 350 shoulder replacement surgeries at Bayfront Health Punta Gorda.

Q: What is the difference and why is it necessary to perform a traditional shoulder replacement vs. a reverse shoulder replacement?

A: The type of replacement surgery depends on the rotator cuff's long-term endurance. In standard shoulder replacement, the shoulder joint (glenohumeral joint) is like a ball and socket. A total shoulder replacement procedure involves



exchanging the arthritic ball with a smooth metal ball that is fixed to the arm bone (humerus) by a stem that fits within it. At the same time, the arthritic socket (glenoid) is resurfaced with a high-density, polyethylene prosthesis.

With a reverse total shoulder replacement, the ball is fixed to the socket while the cup is attached to the upper portion of the humerus. This procedure is recommended for those with a large rotator tear or cuff tear arthropathy because it relies on the deltoid muscle, instead of the rotator cuff, to move the arm. With both types of shoulder surgery, the degree of success hinges on the technical expertise of the surgical team and the patient's commitment to follow-up with physical therapy.

Q: Do you prefer any particular company's devices and why?

A: I like to use Depuy for most of my cases because I feel that it is the most stable. This is especially the case when it comes to withstanding weight-bearing activities. A prime example of this is if my patient needs a walker, I feel confident that the device will support their upper body weight and needs. The devices are made out of titanium and polyethylene, which are extremely durable and dependable. They allow for a smooth flow of rotation and support within the joint and with arm movements.

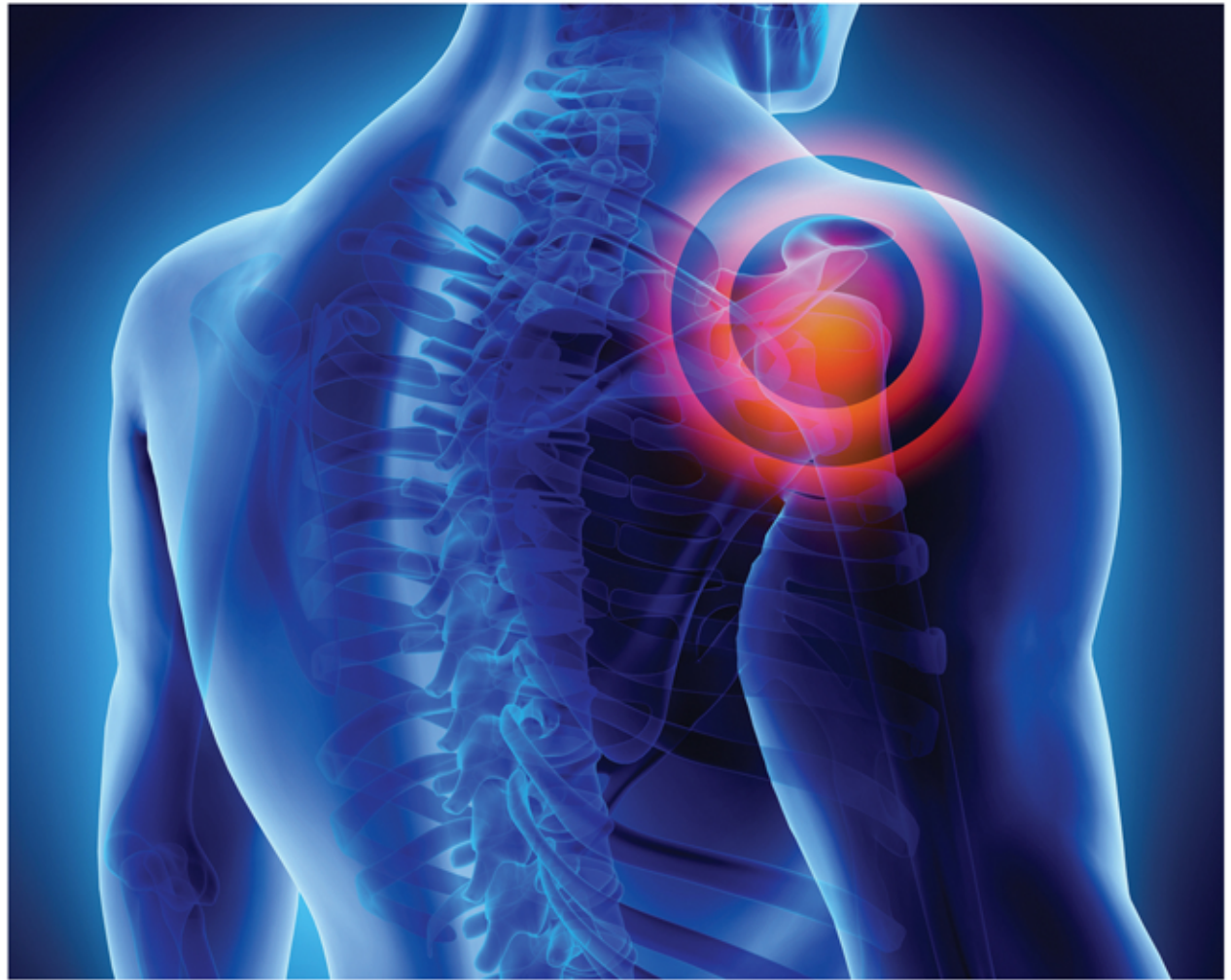
Q: When a patient has shoulder replacement surgery, what should they expect as far as recovery?

A: My patients recover in outpatient or sometimes overnight depending on their health and risk factors on a dedicated unit with all private rooms at the Bayfront Health Punta Gorda Joint and Spine Center. We use an advanced local anesthetic called EXPAREL®. It has a long-lasting numbing effect that ranges from 30 to 36 hours, so it gets the patient over the "hump." I tell my patients, that unlike arthroscopic shoulder repair, which is minimally invasive, but requires a long recovery process, shoulder replacement surgery has a much shorter recovery time.

For their comfort, a patient can expect to be in a sling for two weeks, and they will start physical therapy within a week or two of surgery. Therapy is usually between six and eight weeks long.

Q: What if an individual is trying to heal their rotator cuff tear on their own? What would you say to them about their quality of life and why surgery might be essential?

A: If the tear is repairable, we perform an arthroscopic procedure, but the tear needs to be tended to immediately. If left untreated, the "window" is short for recovery. It's like a cavity; if you don't remove the decay and replace it with a filling or crown, you will lose the tooth altogether. Any shoulder issue needs to be treated, and the sooner, the better. However, when patients need a total shoulder replacement, the outcomes are significant because they finally get their arms moving in the right direction again, and their quality of life is significantly improved.



What better way to decide on an orthopedic surgeon than to hear what a recent patient has to say? We caught up with Esther W. who three months ago had reverse shoulder surgery at Bayfront Health Punta Gorda with Dr. Stchur. Before heading off to the pool with her husband, Esther told us about her experience.

"I think Dr. Stchur is wonderful, professional and yet very approachable! Before my surgery, I was in excruciating pain and could barely use my arm. I'm very happy with my results. I can raise my hand like I did when I was in school, and I can even reach behind my back. As far as my experience with Dr. Stchur, he is the best! He always encourages me to ask him anything, and he doesn't treat you like a number; he takes the time to make you feel important and is always receptive.

"When I first made an appointment, I got in right away with his PA, Luda who is outstanding! She explained that I needed reverse shoulder surgery and quickly got me on track with Dr. Stchur. Most surgeons require their patients to be in a sling for the first six weeks after surgery, which is extremely painful on your elbow, but Dr. Stchur has a different method. He has his patients in a sling for the

first two weeks, and then you go into physical therapy right after that. I believe that this practice, along with his expertise is what helped me recover so quickly. I'm doing great, and if I had to do it again, I would go with Dr. Stchur and the Joint and Spine Center without a doubt."

To learn more about Bayfront Health Punta Gorda's Joint and Spine Center and request an appointment, visit www.myorthohealth.org/bayfront-pcpg.



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