

Rotator Cuff Repair Pre-Operative Information

Shoulder basic information

- The shoulder is a ball and socket joint at the top of the arm. The normal shoulder has cartilage lining the ball and socket leaving the ends of the bones smooth so they can glide smoothly against each other.
- The rotator cuff muscles keep the ball of the shoulder centered on the socket and are integral to the movement of the joint. When there is inflammation or tearing of the rotator cuff these muscles cannot maintain the keeping the ball centered on the socket, thus causing pain.
- If muscles are torn for a long period of time they may become irreparable and typical rotator cuff repair may not be possible.

What happens during rotator cuff surgery?

- The surgery is typically performed arthroscopically meaning through a series of small poke holes (portals) instead of a traditional large incision.
- Repairing the rotator cuff as well as treating other problems in the shoulder can help with shoulder pain, restore the functional balance of the shoulder and prevent further damage.

What is recovery like after rotator cuff repair?

- This is an outpatient procedure for almost all patients meaning you will go home the day of the surgery. If there are specific reasons you will need to stay in the hospital overnight we will discuss these before surgery.
- Ideally, you would have a family member or friend available for at least 2-3 days after the surgery to help you as you will be in a sling.
- You will be in a sling for 6 weeks after surgery and **cannot use your arm for any activities**. The sling will need to be in place for all activities except bathing. This includes sleep.
- Most people return to desk type work within a week of surgery. Manual labor will be a more extensive period of time and we will discuss this individually.
- After 6 weeks, we will allow you to discontinue your sling and start using your arm but we will have restrictions still in place on certain motions and no lifting more than 2 pounds.
- After 12 weeks, the lifting restrictions are discontinued but we recommend slowly returning to regular activities.
- Activities like heavy labor, and sports (tennis, golf) are typically resumed by about 5 months.
- Though you will be doing most of your daily activities far before this, patients continue to improve after shoulder surgery for the first 12 months.

Post-op information

- Your first post-operative appointment will be with my PA Caroline McBane and your second will likely be with me. Further visits will alternate typically based on availability.
- Your post-operative appointment will be scheduled 7-10 days post surgery to check on your progress and obtain x-rays. If you do not have this appointment made at the time of your surgery please call the office and ask for an appointment at 336-375-2300. Pain control
- Pain is expected and normal after surgery. We use a variety of medicines to minimize pain but it is still normal to have pain for many days after the surgery though it will be manageable.

- It is important to minimize narcotics after surgery as they are extremely addictive and have many dangerous side effects. I use a multimodal pain management regimen to try and control pain while minimizing the number of narcotic pills required.
- Most patients go home with scheduled Acetaminophen (Tylenol), an anti-inflammatory (meloxicam, celebrex or ibuprofen) and a narcotic (oxycodone). It is VERY rare to need a refill on narcotics after surgery and most patients are off them completely by 4 days after surgery.

Physical Therapy

- Physical Therapy (PT) is integral to doing well after a rotator cuff repair. Without a commitment to PT you may very well be worse after surgery due to stiffness or weakness. PT will usually be twice a week for the first 12 weeks. **If you are unwilling to participate fully in PT, this surgery may not be appropriate for you.**
- PT will typically start about 1 week after surgery but will discuss your plan individually. You will be provided a physical therapy prescriptions at the time of your first visit after surgery.

Anesthesia

- You will be fully asleep for the entire procedure.
- For the vast majority of patients, anesthesia is very safe. There are specific risks with any anesthetic procedure and the anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist will discuss these with you at the time of surgery.
- Regional anesthesia, in the form of a nerve block, may be considered in the setting of shoulder replacement but it also has risks and benefits.
- Your anesthesiologist will speak to you prior to the procedure to go over the pros and cons of anesthesia options. **Ultimately, the decisions about anesthesia are made by you.**

Risks of surgery

- Rotator cuff repair is a surgery and like all surgeries there are potential risks. The vast majority of patients have a good outcome and are happy they had surgery.
- Infection, stiffness, nerve and vessel injuries, and rotator cuff re-tear are all extremely uncommon but have been reported in the literature.
- The risk of re-tearing your rotator cuff is a complex issue and is individual for each patient. We will discuss this before and after your surgery. Smoking, diabetes and other medical conditions all negatively can affect your healing.

For more information visit the patient information section at drdaxvarkey.com or scan below

