

The goal of rotator cuff repair surgery is create an environment that will allow healing to occur. This is accomplished by securing torn tendon (the rotator cuff) back onto bone (the humerus). Once the surgery is complete, the healing process begins. This is an important concept to understand as a common misbelieve is that surgery has “fixed my shoulder.” By restoring the anatomy of your rotator cuff, surgery allows your body to undergo the biological healing process it was unable to go through when the tendon was torn away from the bone.

Sling

When you wake up from surgery, your shoulder will be in a sling. The sling is being used to protect your repair. It is important that you wear the sling at all times other than dressing and bathing. The sling comes with a pillow that sits in between your arm and your body. In order to protect your repair, the sling must be worn with this pillow.

Exercise and Movement

As a general rule, you should not actively move your arm at any time. You will be provided with a set of exercises to help prevent stiffness and assist in recovery. These exercises are passive which means you are performing exercises that involve no contraction of the muscles of your shoulder. This is accomplished through the use of your other arm or someone else helping you.

Physical Therapy

In an effort to help aid and maximize the effectiveness of the healing process, you will be attending physical therapy. Prior to your surgery, you will be given a script for postoperative physical therapy. We recommend you schedule your first postoperative visit before surgery to ensure you are seen at the appropriate time following surgery. Your first physical therapy visit should be 7 to 10 days following the date of surgery. If you plan to attend therapy outside the UConn Health Center, please inform us and we will provide a postoperative protocol for your physical therapist.

Surgical Dressing/Bandages

After two days, you may remove the surgical dressing and bandages. After the dressings are removed, you may shower and bath with cellophane over your shoulder to help keep your incision sites dry. Once your stitches are removed, you can start showering or bathing without the cellophane.

Shirt

In an effort to protect your arm, we ask that you wear a button-up shirt following surgery. Unlike pull over t-shirts, button shirts do not require you to lift your arm over your head. When donning and doffing the button-up shirt, lean forward and use the shoulder that did not have surgery to assist your surgical shoulder into the sleeve.