

# Rotator Cuff Repair



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# General Information

This is a guide for your recovery journey following your Rotator Cuff Repair.

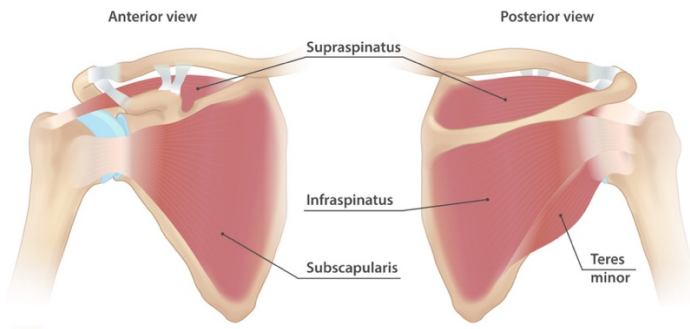
Mr Chung or other members of your care team may adapt the plan depending on you or your shoulder.

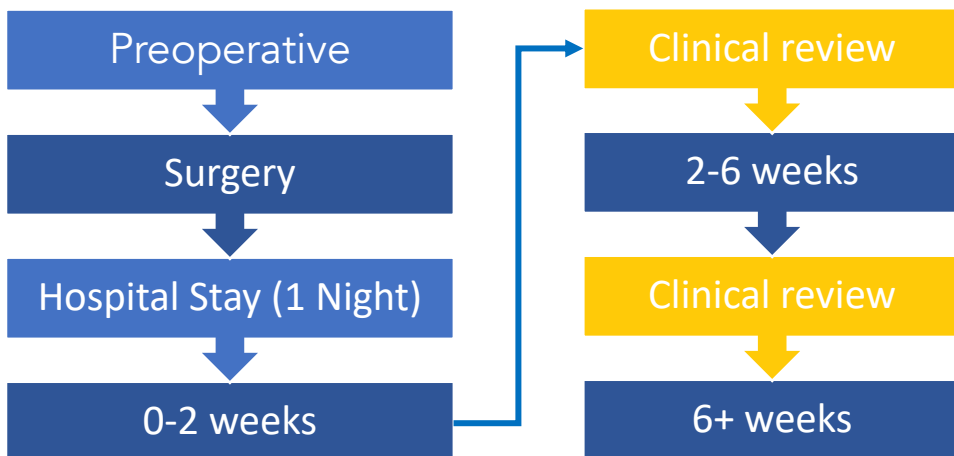
If you have severe pain, issues with your wound/dressing or any other health issues please **contact Mr Chung** or consider presenting to your nearest **Emergency Department**.

## Rotator Cuff Repair

The rotator cuff is a group of muscles and tendons that help stabilise the shoulder. When torn they require repair to prevent further deterioration of shoulder function and to prevent arthritis.

Surgery involves utilising suture anchors to repair the tendon to bone. Suture anchors are small plastic screws with suture attached to them. The suture anchor is inserted into the bone and the suture is passed through the tendon pulling the torn tendon back onto the bone. The bone and tendon then heal together over a period of a few months.





## Preoperative

Once you have decided to undergo a Rotator Cuff Repair there are a few things you will need to do to prepare for the surgery. These include:

- A preoperative **MRI scan**
- **Blood tests** (FBE, UEC, CMP, Vitamin D, Coags, G&H)
- A fitness for surgery **assessment**
- Continue doing shoulder **exercises** (as pain permits)
- **Designating** someone to drop you off and pick you up from the hospital

Before your Rotator Cuff Repair, please contact Mr Chung if you:

- Start a new medication
- Have developed a new health condition
- Have had a shoulder injection

A Rotator Cuff Repair **should not be performed** within 3 months of a shoulder injection for risk of infection.

# Surgery

## Food

On the day of surgery you will need to fast from food and drink. Mr Chung or the hospital will provide you with fasting times prior to the day of your operation.

Fasting includes avoiding:

- Food
- Tea and coffee
- Chewing gum



## Medications

Unless instructed otherwise, you should have your regular morning medications on the day of surgery with a sip of water.

If unsure please speak to Mr Chung about your medications prior to surgery.

Medications that we **may** withhold 2 days prior to surgery include:

- Rivaroxaban/Xarelto
- Apixaban/Eliquis
- Dabigatran/Pradaxa
- Warfarin/Coumadin
- SGLT2 Diabetic medication (Medications ending in -flozin)

Medications that **may** require altered dosing prior to surgery include:

- Blood thinning medication (Clopidogrel/Ticagrelor)
- Diabetic medication (oral and insulin)
- Immunosuppressants

# Hospital Stay

Following surgery, you will wake up in the recovery suite to allow recovery from the anaesthesia. You will notice your shoulder has a dressing and your arm will be in a sling. You will then be transferred to the surgical ward. You can go home the next day when your pain is under control and you are eating and drinking.

Your first day in hospital may include:

- A review by a **Physiotherapist**
- An **X-ray** that Mr Chung will review
- An **injection** to prevent clots in your legs (DVT/PE)
- A change of your **dressings**

Things that you are **allowed** to do straight away with your shoulder include:

- Eating and drinking
- Using a mobile phone
- Using a computer



Things that you should **avoid** doing with your shoulder for the first 6 weeks include:

- Lifting greater than 500g  
(no more than a cup of tea or coffee)
- Driving a car
- Using your arm to go to the toilet



## Dressings

You should have a dressing on your shoulder at all times till the wound heals. This takes approximately 2 weeks and the dressing will be removed at your first clinical review. Dressing changes should be kept to a minimum to avoid the risk of infection.

If the dressing becomes wet or soaked with blood it will need to be changed. You are able to take a shower but you will need to change the dressing if it becomes soaked.

# Exercises (0 – 4 weeks post surgery)

Your **sling** should be worn **most of the time** when resting, sleeping and when you are outside in public areas. You are allowed to **remove your sling** to take a shower, eat and drink and use a computer.

Exercises should be done for around **15 minutes** on **at least three** separate occasions throughout the day (after breakfast, lunch and dinner).

## Scapula/Shoulder blade

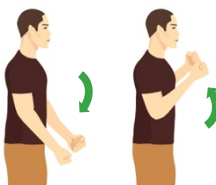
Elevate your shoulders towards your ear and hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times

Retract your shoulders by pinching your shoulder blades together and holding for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times



## Elbow

Take your arm out of the sling straightening out the elbow completely then bring your hand towards your face, repeat 10 times



## Wrist and Hand

Grip a stress ball and hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times.

Writing and typing is encouraged to maintain wrist and hand dexterity.

# Exercises (4-8 weeks post surgery)

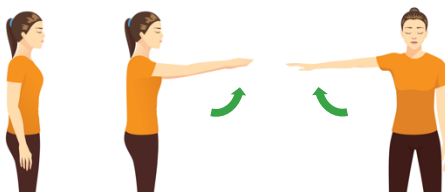
Building on from the previous exercises begin some movement exercises on your shoulder. Avoid turning your arm out past your side (external rotation beyond 0 degrees).

Until you regain the strength in your shoulder, use your other arm to assist your new shoulder with these exercises. Your goal is to lift your upper arm parallel to the floor by the 8 week post surgery period.

## Shoulder Movement exercises (Isotonic)

Lift your arm forward and hold it there for 5 seconds, slowly lower it down, repeat 10 times.

Lift your arm out to the side and hold it there for 5 seconds, slowly lower it down, repeat 10 times.



## Shoulder Static exercises (Isometric)

Standing facing the wall, place your hand on the wall and push against it, holding it for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times.

Standing side on to the wall, place your forearm and elbow against the wall and push against it holding it for 10 seconds, relax and repeat 10 times.



# Exercises (8+ weeks post surgery)

Exercises during this period will be tailored to your specific needs/goals. Mr Chung and your physiotherapist will work with you to figure out the right exercise program.

In general exercises during this period are about achieving more shoulder range of motion, building strength and achieving functional goals.

You are now able to lift up to 1kg between the 8 and 12 week postoperative period. In addition you may find exercises lying on your back to be helpful.

## For your physiotherapist

Please contact Mr Chung with any questions

**0-4 weeks** – 500g lifting limit, sling, scapulothoracic, elbow, wrist and hand AROM

**4-8 weeks** – 500g lifting limit, sling

Shoulder – AROM Flex to 90, Abd to 90, ER to 0, IR to hip + Isometric strengthening

Elbow, Wrist and Hand – AROM

**8-12 weeks** – 1kg weight limit, unrestricted ROM, begin supine ROM exercises

**12+ weeks** – No further restrictions



Fellow of the Royal Australasian  
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