

**Patient Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-Up Appointment:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Shoulder Arthroscopy Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***How much pain will I have?***

Following surgery, most patients will experience a variable amount of pain. This is dependent on what type of surgery you had and how your body reacts to surgery. You will be given a prescription for pain medication following surgery to control your pain. You should take the pain medication regularly for the first 2 days and then only when required or before physiotherapy sessions. If you feel that you are having an extraordinary amount of pain following surgery despite taking pain medication, please contact my office (numbers listed below), or after hours the on-call orthopaedic registrar at Concord Hospital on 9767 5000.

### ***How much swelling and bruising will there be?***

Following shoulder arthroscopy there will be a significant amount of swelling in the shoulder. This is due to the surgery itself but mostly due to the arthroscopy fluid which is used to expand the joint and help visualization. It is not uncommon for the swelling and bruising to travel down the arm into the forearm and hand and also into the chest. It is extremely important to remove all jewellery, especially rings on fingers before surgery- these should be left at home. To help with the swelling after surgery you should perform simple hand, wrist and elbow exercises 3 times a day for 20 minutes each time. If you feel you have an extraordinary amount of swelling or bruising following surgery, please contact me as listed above.

### ***How much drainage and bleeding will there be and when can I change the dressing?***

Fluid is pumped into the shoulder to aid visualization during surgery. This fluid causes the shoulder to swell and it is normal for this fluid and some blood to ooze out of the wounds after the surgery. A bulky dressing may be applied over the smaller dressings. This dressing often becomes soaked with fluid and or blood. It may be removed after 24 hours. Underneath this bulky dressing are smaller "stick on" dressings. They should be changed if they are soaked through, but may otherwise be left in place. Most wounds should be dry by 5 days after surgery. If your wounds are still draining thick blood or thick yellow fluid then you should contact me or my orthopaedic registrar on the numbers listed.

**When can I take a bath or shower?**

You should not soak the wounds in a bath or swimming pool for 2 weeks. You may shower or sponge bath after surgery, but you must not scrub the wounds and must try to keep them dry by covering them with a clean garbage bag or "Glad Wrap". You may take the sling off when in the shower and support it with the other hand. If the wounds get wet, just pat them dry with a clean towel and apply new dressings. It is important to keep the armpit clean and dry. When cleaning the armpit, don't lift the arm with the muscles of the shoulder- you may damage the repair. Instead, lean forward by bending at the waist and allow the operated arm to gently dangle away from the body. You can then sponge and dry the armpit.

**How often do I need to wear the sling?**

You will wear the sling for 3 to 6 weeks depending on the surgery you had. You should wear the sling all the time, **especially when you are sleeping**. You may remove the sling when you are showering or doing your exercises.

**Can I use my arm to eat or write?**

You can gently use your operated arm to eat. It is easiest to slip your arm out of the sling and use your hand to feed yourself by bending at the elbow. Keep your elbow at your side and do not reach or do anything away from your body or lift anything heavy (no more than a coffee cup). Similarly you can write or type by keeping the elbow at your side.

**How can I get comfortable to sleep?**

Some patients have difficulty finding a comfortable position to sleep. When you sleep on your back it may help to place a small pillow behind the elbow or shoulder to help support the weight of the shoulder. If you sleep on your side (the operated side up) then it may help to place a pillow between your arms. You can also sleep in a reclining chair or propped up with pillows in bed. When you are getting in and out of a bed or chair, DO NOT use your operated arm to push down.

**When should I return to work?**

This depends on the type of work you do, how much pain you are in, and what type of surgery you have had. In general, most patients do not work until they are seen back in the rooms or clinic at 10 to 14 days after surgery. After this, most patients are able to tolerate either single-handed work (i.e. answering the phone) or light deskwork duties only.

**Who should I contact if I think I have a problem?**

You should contact Dr Trantalidis through his office during work hours or his on-call orthopaedic registrar at Concord Hospital after hours on 9767 5000.

## Patient Surgical Information Sheet and Rehabilitation Following Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

### Operative Procedure

<input type="checkbox"/> Supraspinatus Repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Distal clavicle excision	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Subscapularis Repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Coplaning of AC joint	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Infraspinatus Repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Biceps tenotomy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Subacromial decompression	<input type="checkbox"/> Biceps Tenodesis	

### Shoulder Range of Motion Program

- Do not use the muscles in the operated shoulder to move the arm. Instead use the power of the other arm to gently but progressively move your operated arm through a range of motion.
- All exercises to be done 4 times per day
- Perform each movement 10 times during each session.
- Hold each stretch for a count of 10 seconds
- Each time you perform your exercises try to increase the range of motion within the limits stated.
- Use pain as your guide. You should feel some discomfort with each stretch, however, it should not be severe pain.

**Slings:** 6 weeks

#### A. Hand & Wrist Exercises Begin these exercises now

Open and close your hand by making a fist then straightening out your fingers.  
Bend your wrist back and forth as if knocking on a door (keep arm at side).

#### B. Elbow Exercises Begin these exercises now

Bend and straighten your elbow. You may perform this exercise initially with the help of the other arm but you can use the muscles of the operated arm.

Bend and straighten your elbow. Perform this exercise using the good arm to straighten and bend the elbow. Do not use the muscles of the operated arm. Do not straighten the elbow completely. Stop about 20 degrees short of completely straight.

With your elbow at your side and bent at a right angle, turn palm up and palm down.

#### C. Shoulder Exercises

No Shoulder Exercises for the first 6 weeks. You will receive a new set of exercises at the 6 week mark after surgery.