

Arthroscopic Labral Repair

What is the Labrum?

The humeral head rests in a shallow socket called the glenoid. Because the humeral head is much larger than the socket, a soft fibrous rim called the labrum surrounds the socket to help stabilize the joint. The rim deepens the socket so that the humeral head fits better.

How do you repair the labrum?

The labrum will be repaired by making small incisions around the shoulder and by use of an arthroscope (camera) to see all the structures of the joint. Special instruments allow your surgeon to sew the labrum to the correct (anatomic) position.

What are some of the risks of surgery?

Any surgery carries a potential risk of infection, bleeding and nerve damage at the site of surgery. For a labral repair there is also a risk that the labrum will not heal properly causing the shoulder to be unstable, the labrum will re-tear or the shoulder will get stiff after surgery. If these problems are encountered, a second operation may be necessary. The risks associated with anesthesia will be discussed with you by the anesthesiologist on the day of surgery.

Length of Stay

This is same day surgery. You will need to have someone who can take you home.

Anesthesia

Patients usually have two types of anesthesia for this surgery. The first is general anesthesia, which means you are asleep. The second type of anesthesia is a nerve block. Your arm will be numb and will feel very strange. The nerve block will last about 12-24 hours. The ultimate choice of anesthesia technique is up to you and your anesthesiologist.

Incisions

You will have 3-5 small incisions around your shoulder. They will only be about 1 cm long.

Pain

You will have pain medication prescribed for you prior to discharge. After the nerve block wears off you will have discomfort. Most of the pain is related to your very swollen shoulder. That swelling will resolve in 24-48 hours.

Sling

Your arm will be placed in a pillow sling prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your sling 24 hours a day. This includes sleeping in your sling. For the four weeks that you are in your sling, **you are not permitted to drive.**

Dressings

You will go home with dressings that may be removed 3 days after your surgery. There will be small black sutures (stitches) that will be taken out at your first postoperative appointment approximately 2 weeks after your surgery.

Physical Therapy

For the first two months of recovery, you will do very gentle stretching at home. During the second half of your recovery, you will continue to do your home exercises and also attend formal physical therapy.

Restrictions

Recovery from labral repair surgery is three to five months. During that time, you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

Day of surgery to Week 4: remain in sling, no use of arm, out of work, no driving

Months 1-2: opposite hand work only

Months 2-3.5: no lifting and carrying anything greater than 10 lbs and only occasional over shoulder reaching

Months 3.5-5: no lifting and carrying anything greater than 20 lbs