

LANCASTER ORTHOPEDIC GROUP

231 Granite Run Drive, Lancaster, PA 17601
(866) LOG-1000 • (717) 560-4200 • Fax (717) 560-4159
<http://www.lancasterortho.com>

Michael J. Bercik, MD

What is the Rotator Cuff?

The rotator cuff is made up of four muscles and their tendons (Supraspinatus, Infraspinatus, Subscapularis & Teres Minor) that surround the shoulder joint. When you raise your arm the rotator cuff holds the ball (humeral head) of the shoulder within the socket (glenoid).

How do you repair the rotator cuff?

The rotator cuff will be repaired by making poke hole incisions around the shoulder and by use of an arthroscope (camera) to see all the structures of the joint. Special instruments allow Dr. Bercik to sew the rotator cuff back to the correct (anatomic) position.

Length of Stay

This is same day surgery. You will need to have someone who can take you home. Your ride does not have to stay all day.

Anesthesia

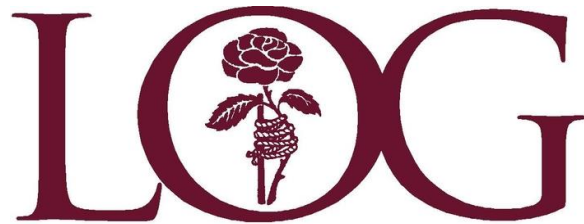
Patients usually have two types of anesthesia for this surgery. The first is general anesthesia, which means you are asleep. The second type of anesthesia is a nerve block. Your arm will be numb and will feel very strange. The nerve block will last about 12-14 hours. The anesthesiologist will speak to you on the day of surgery. The ultimate choice of anesthesia technique is up to you and your anesthesiologist.

Incision

You will have several small incisions around your shoulder. They will only be about 1 cm long each.

Pain

Rotator cuff repairs are initially very uncomfortable. 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.



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Sling

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your sling at all times for the first 2 weeks, except when performing hygiene or elbow/wrist/hand exercises. This includes sleeping in your sling.

Depending on the size of your tear, you will wear the sling for a total of 4 to 6 weeks.

Driving

You are not permitted to drive while wearing the sling. Once the sling is removed and you can safely reach the “10 and 2” position on the steering wheel, you can begin to drive.

Dressings

You will go home with clear dressings and gauze. After 2 days you may remove the dressings. There will be small black sutures (stitches) that will be taken out at your first post-operative appointment 1-2 weeks after your surgery.

Physical Therapy

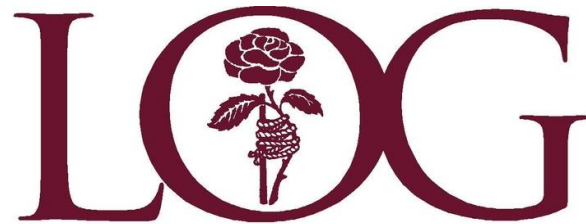
For the first two to three months of recovery you will do very gentle stretching at home. You will be given a prescription for physical therapy at your first visit. Initially, the physical therapists will help you stretch. After three months, they will help you strengthen your shoulder.

Restrictions

Recovery from rotator cuff repair surgery is six months. During that time, you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

Work and activity restrictions are consistent regardless of repair type and job:

- 0-6 weeks: No work, no use of operative hand
- 6 wks-3 mo: Nothing in operative hand heavier than a fork/knife/toothbrush. Cleared to return to work for opposite hand work only
- 3 mo: No lifting greater than 10 pounds, only occasional overhead reaching
- 4 mo: No lifting greater than 20 pounds



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- 5 mo: No lifting greater than 30 pounds
- 6 mo: Released from restrictions, return to work full duty

Pictures

Dr. Bercik will take photos during your surgery. If you are given pictures, please bring those pictures to your first postoperative visit. Dr. Bercik will review them with you and discuss exactly what was done in your shoulder.