

Shoulder Arthroscopy

Subacromial Decompression / Bursectomy and Rotator Cuff Repair

Shoulder impingement and rotator cuff tears are very common conditions. It occurs when there is degeneration of the rotator cuff tendons and the bursa around them.

It is also known as:

- Impingement syndrome
- Shoulder bursitis
- Rotator cuff tendinitis

Your rotator cuff is a group of muscles around your shoulder joint. They are very important as these muscles have an essential role in moving your shoulder in all directions, especially when lifting your hand above your head and rotating your shoulder.

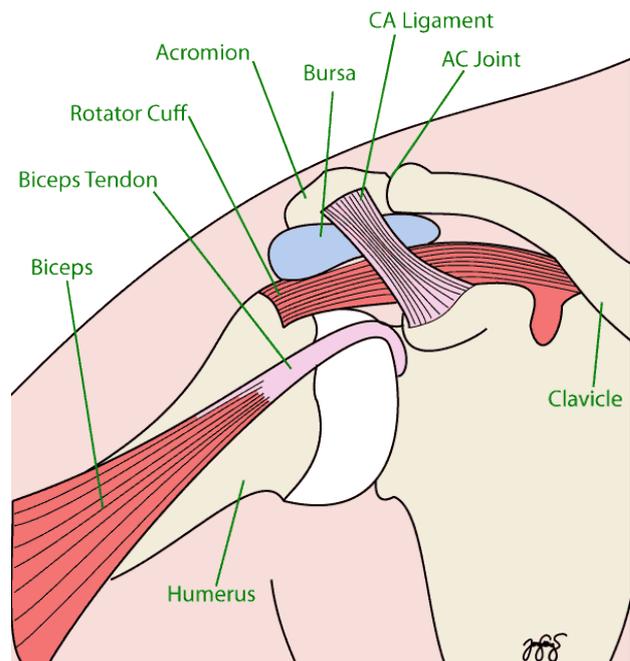
A **bursa** is a fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between tendons, bones, and skin. There are numerous bursae around the shoulder, but the most important one is called the 'subacromial bursae'. It's located above your shoulder joint and rotator cuff muscles, and protects them from rubbing on the bone above called the '**acromion**'.

Impingement syndrome is usually a combination of the tendons becoming inflamed (**tendonitis**) and the bursa becoming inflamed (**bursitis**).

A **rotator cuff tear** is when one of your rotator cuff muscles (most often the supraspinatus) is torn from its attachment to the humerus. If there is a full thickness tear, this requires surgical reattachment.

ARTHROSCOPY (Key Hole Surgery)

The operation is usually performed using a narrow telescopic camera called an **arthroscope**, which is inserted into the joint through a small cut.



Shoulder arthroscopy usually requires 2 -4 small incisions (1 cm in size)

The arthroscope is introduced through the skin to enter the shoulder joint. Once in the joint, the tissues are inspected looking for tears in ligaments, muscles and tendons, and cartilage damage of your joint surfaces.

After the joint is examined, the arthroscope is placed in the space above the rotator cuff. It is in this space that the bone spur located on the acromion is smoothed off, and this is called a **decompression**.

The inflamed bursa is also removed (bursectomy)

If your rotator cuff is fully torn, then surgical reattachment will be performed.

Other procedures that could be performed during the arthroscopy include:

- AC joint excision for arthritis
- Biceps tendon tenotomy or tenodesis
- Release of frozen shoulder



Anaesthetic

It is performed under general anaesthetic (you are asleep for the surgery). For some patients, a nerve block may also be recommended.

Length of Stay in Hospital

Most patients stay in hospital overnight.

RECOVERY

Slings

After the operation, your arm will be placed in a shoulder sling after surgery. The length of time in the sling varies and depends on the findings in surgery.

- **2 weeks:** For decompression & bursectomy
- **6 weeks:** For rotator cuff repair

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

You will need to rest until the effects of the anaesthetic have passed. General anaesthesia temporarily affects your coordination and reasoning skills, so you must not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign legal documents for 48 hours afterwards.

If you had a local or regional anaesthetic, it may take several hours before the feeling comes back into the treated shoulder.

Before you go home, Mr Tran will visit you to discuss the outcome of the operation. A physiotherapist will also see you to discuss exercises and rehabilitation. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home.

Appointment after surgery

Approximately 7-10 days after surgery. During this appointment, your surgery will be discussed and your physiotherapy organised.

RECOVERING FROM SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

It can take between two and six months to fully recover from shoulder arthroscopy. How long it takes for you to recover will depend on a number of things, including how healthy you are before the operation, the findings of your operation and how well you keep up with your physiotherapy.

If you need pain relief, you can take over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

It's important that you continue any exercises recommended by your physiotherapist, as these will help you to recover more quickly.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

All surgery has potential risks and complications, and it is important you understand the risks, complications and alternative treatments before having any type of surgical procedure. Shoulder arthroscopy is commonly a performed operation with few complications .

Shoulder arthroscopy is also usually very successful but for some, it may not relieve the pain. In a small number of patients, shoulder arthroscopy call cause a condition called Frozen Shoulder. Tendon repairs can also failure, requiring further surgery.

The potential risks include infection, excessive bleeding or developing a blood clot, usually in a vein in the leg (deep vein thrombosis, DVT) or an unexpected reaction to the anaesthetic including stroke and death.

Fortunately, complications are rare but still need to be fully considered.

For more information, visit

www.phongtran.com.au/shoulder-arthroscopy



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