

Acromioclavicular Joint Reconstruction

What is an Acromioclavicular joint separation?

The acromioclavicular joint (AC joint) is where the collarbone (clavicle) meets the highest point of the wingbone (acromion). The ligaments that surround and stabilize the AC joint are torn. Without any ligament support, the shoulder falls under the weight of the arm and the clavicle is pushed up, causing a bump on the shoulder.

How do you repair an AC separation?

The AC joint will be repaired by making an incision across the top of the shoulder. Dr. Acevedo uses a strong non-absorbable suture reinforced with metal buttons to stabilize the joint. If the injury is within 4 weeks, then he may perform the surgery arthroscopically assisted and minimally invasive. If the injury is old, reconstructing the ligaments that attach to the underside of the collarbone may be done. Cadaver tendon is used to reconstruct the ligaments. It is your choice to use the cadaver tendon or to use an autograft (from your knee).

Length of Stay

This is performed as an outpatient surgery. You will need to have someone to drive you home after you have been discharged.

Anesthesia

This surgery is performed under general anesthesia, which means you are asleep.

Incision

You will have an incision across your shoulder usually on the top. After the incision has healed, it is usually very thin and not very noticeable.

Pain

You will have a opioid limiting pain regimen prescribed for when you are discharged home. Typically you will be given Toradol, an anti-inflammatory to take for 3-5 days, Gabapentin a nerve pain medication to be taken for 2 weeks, and a narcotic medication such as Norco or Percocet to be used sparingly for breakthrough pain. **After a few days most patients are comfortable on ES Tylenol.**

Sling

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. Sling use is for 6 weeks. You are to remain in your sling 24 hours a day. This includes sleeping in your sling. The sling can be removed to get dressed and for showers only.

Dressings

You will go home with a clear tegaderm waterproof dressing. Try to keep the tegaderm dressing on until your post op appointment. You may shower after surgery as long as the dressing is intact.

Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy will begin at 6 weeks after surgery. After 2 weeks You will be allowed to perform light exercises while at home. Dr. Acevedo will show you these exercises at the post operative visit. If you prefer home therapy, Dr Acevedo can prescribe you a program with the MyHealthTrack app.

Restrictions

Recovery from an AC separation surgery is six months. During that time you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

Day of surgery to Week 6: no use of arm (Typing is ok), out of work

Months 1.5-3: opposite hand work only

Months 3-4.5: no lifting or carrying greater than 10 lbs, only occasional reaching

Months 4.5-6: no lifting greater than 20 lbs

> 6 Months: No restrictions. No Contact Sports for 9 months.

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