

## **Lower Trapezius Tendon Transfer**

### ***What is the Lower Trapezius?***

The Lower trapezius tendon, also known as 'The Lower Trap', is a muscle that attached via a tendon on the scapula. It normally functions to assist in externally rotating your arm.

### ***Why do you transfer the tendon?***

The Lower trapezius tendon is attached to an allograft Achilles tendon and is then transferred from the inside of your humerus to the top where there is a rotator cuff defect from a massive irreparable tear. The tendon is anchored to the top of the humerus with suture anchors placed in the bone. With the left lower trapezius tendon attached to the new position it can function to elevate the arm way from the body, depress the humeral head to prevent bone on bone contact, and assist with externally rotating the arm

### ***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. It is normal for the hand and arm to feel "tingly" for up to 24 hours.

### ***Incision***

This surgery is performed arthroscopically assisted. This means you will be part open and part arthroscopic. You will have one incision on the back of your shoulder near the shoulder blade and about 5 small arthroscopic incisions about 1 cm each around the shoulder. The sutures are buried and absorbable. There will be small "Steri-Strips" on the wounds after you remove the dressings, and these will stay on for about 2 weeks. The steri-strips can get wet in the shower.

### ***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. Its is important to stay on top of the pain medication. Most patients receive Toradol, which is a strong anti-inflammatory. Begin taking this medication when you get home. The Narcotic you

are prescribed should be used as a rescue medication as needed. For the first 2 days it is advised that you take 1 of these pills around the clock to stay on top of the pain. If it is too strong, you can take Extra strength Tylenol in its place.

### ***Sling***

Your arm will be placed in a sling prior to leaving the operating room. You are to remain in your sling 24 hours a day. This includes sleeping in your sling. Sling use is for 4 weeks after a Rotator Cuff Repair. This aids in healing. For the four weeks that you are in your sling, **you are not permitted to drive**. You can remove the sling to take showers and get dressed. Allow the operative arm to dangle at the side and avoid active lifting of the arm.

### ***Post Op Ice Therapy***

If you can obtain an Ice Machine Unit these are very helpful. **Please be sure to bring it in with you on the day of surgery.** Plan to use ice on the shoulder intermittently at least for the first 48 hours after surgery. You should use ice therapy on the shoulder for 15-minute increments throughout the day. Using ice therapy helps decrease pain and swelling. You can use it daily as needed throughout your recovery period.

### ***Driving***

You are not allowed to drive until you are out of the sling and you feel safe. This is usually about 4- 6 weeks post op.

### ***Dressings***

You will go home with dressings and gauze. You may shower after surgery as long as the TEGADERM dressing is intact. If the tegaderm begins to fall off it may be removed after 3 days. The actual skin incision CANNOT get wet prior to 3 days. After the dressings are removed, simply allow the water to wash over the site and then pat dry. Do not rub the incisions. Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering.

### ***Physical Therapy***

For the 6 weeks of recovery you will be immobilized in a Gunslinger sling. Formal Physical Therapy can begin after 4 weeks. You should set up your appointments with your therapists before surgery. You will attend formal physical therapy until you are about 6 months after your surgery. Physical Therapy is an important part of restoring strength and motion after a tendon transfer. I

### ***Restrictions***

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Recovery from a Lower Trap Transfer is about six months to 1 year. During that time you will have restrictions on the use of your operative arm.

**Day of surgery to Week 5:** remain in sling, no use of arm, out of work, no driving

**Months 1-3:** opposite hand work only

**Months 3-4.5:** no lifting and carrying anything greater than 10 lbs and only occasional over shoulder reaching

**Months 4.5-6:** no lifting and carrying anything greater than 20 lbs

**>6 months:** no restrictions, resume activities as tolerated

***Follow Up Appt***

You should have had your follow up appointment made at the time of your preoperative appointment. You should be seen at around 10-14 days.

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