

Biceps Tenodesis — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Biceps Tendinitis / Biceps Tendon Tear at the Shoulder — Shoulder Arthroscopy with Open Biceps Tenodesis

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

The **long head of the biceps tendon** runs through a groove at the front of the shoulder and attaches inside the joint at the top of the socket. It can become inflamed, frayed, partly torn, or unstable in its groove, causing pain at the front of the shoulder with lifting, reaching, and overhead use.

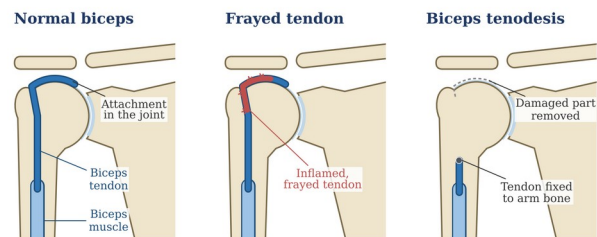
The surgery

This is a typically outpatient surgery. The joint is first examined with a camera through small incisions, and frayed or inflamed tissue is cleaned up. The damaged part of the biceps tendon is then released and reattached to the arm bone through a small incision near the armpit (**biceps tenodesis**). The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: Most patients have less pain at the front of the shoulder and return to full use of the arm.

Risks are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, cramping or a change in the shape of the biceps, failure of the reattachment, tenderness at the new attachment site, fracture of the arm bone (rare), injury to nearby structures (such as nerves, blood vessels, or cartilage), stiffness, persistent pain, and the need for further surgery. These will be reviewed with you in detail before surgery.



Biceps tendon problem and tenodesis (illustration)

Before Surgery

- **Medications:** We will tell you what to stop and when (e.g., blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, some supplements, weight-loss injections).
- **Fasting:** Follow the instructions from your surgery coordinator/facility. In general, you should have nothing to eat or drink starting at midnight the night before surgery.
- **Nicotine:** Stop all nicotine products—they slow healing.
- **Equipment:** A sling is typically provided at or before surgery.
- **Physical therapy:** Schedule your first visit for within about a week after surgery.
- **Home:** Plan for a helper at first; a recliner can make sleep easier.
- **Medical history:** Let us know if you or anyone in your family has a history of blood clot disorders or a malignant hyperthermia reaction to anesthesia.
- **Health:** Call us if you develop a fever, illness, or skin problem near the shoulder.

Day of Surgery

- If instructed, take blood pressure/heart medications with a small sip of water.
- Arrive at the time given by your surgery coordinator.
- Bring your medication list, insurance card, photo ID, and sling if you have them.
- Wear a loose, button-front shirt; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- A responsible adult must drive you home. You may **not** drive yourself.

Immediately After Surgery

- You will recover in the recovery area; most patients go home the same day.
- Your surgeon will discuss the procedure with you and your support person.
- Your care team will review wound care, restrictions, medications, follow-up, and warning signs before discharge.

Milestone

What to Expect After Surgery (General Timeline)

**It is important to note, if a rotator cuff repair is combined with a biceps tenodesis, the recovery defaults to the rotator cuff protocol.*

Sling	Typically 2–4 weeks, weaned as comfort allows. Shoulder motion starts right away with no set limits.
Daily life	Desk work often within 1–2 weeks. For 6 weeks: no lifting or carrying with the surgical arm and no forceful elbow bending or forearm twisting (such as opening jars). No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Lifting & overhead	Biceps strengthening starts ~6 weeks with very light weight and builds gradually. Unrestricted lifting is generally not before 3 months.
Sports	Full return to sports and heavy work typically between 3 and 6 months, once strength matches the other side.

► **Please note:** This is a general guide only. Detailed post-operative instructions will be provided on the day of surgery, and your restrictions and timeline may change based on the findings and procedures performed.

Learn More

We **strongly recommend** reading these pages from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (OrthoInfo) before your surgery:

- **Your condition: Biceps Tendinitis** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/diseases--conditions/biceps-tendinitis/>
- **Your procedure: Shoulder Arthroscopy** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/treatment/shoulder-arthroscopy/>

Video: You may find a video demonstrating an example (not the exact technique) of your surgery at

<https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/activity/2016104-biceps-tendinitis> (or browse <https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/catalog>).

Questions before surgery? Call our office at (972) 378-1438. For a medical emergency, call 911.