

Pectoralis Major Repair — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Pectoralis Major Tendon Tear

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

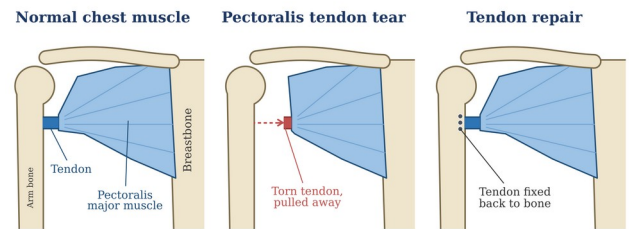
The **pectoralis major** is the large chest muscle that pulls the arm across and in toward the body. Its tendon attaches to the upper arm bone. A **tendon tear** usually happens during heavy lifting—most often the bench press—with a sudden pop, bruising, weakness, and a change in the shape of the chest.

The surgery

Pectoralis major repair is a typically outpatient surgery done through an incision at the front of the shoulder near the armpit. The torn tendon is found, freed up, and reattached to the arm bone with strong sutures and small implants. Older tears may need a tendon graft; if so, this will be discussed with you. The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: Most patients regain strength and the normal shape of the chest and return to lifting and sports. **Risks** are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, re-tear of the tendon, lasting weakness with heavy pressing, a change in the shape of the chest, wound or skin problems in the armpit, 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.



Pectoralis major tendon tear and repair (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:** Shoulder therapy typically starts ~4 weeks after surgery; we will tell you when to schedule.
- **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 chest or armpit.

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)
Sling	Worn for 4–6 weeks with the arm held against the body. The shoulder is not moved for the first 4 weeks; gentle guided motion then begins.
Daily life	Desk work often within 1–2 weeks. No lifting, pushing, or pulling with the surgical arm for 6 weeks; full motion returns between 8 and 12 weeks. No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Lifting	Light band exercises from ~8 weeks. No push-ups, pressing, or weights before 12 weeks; light weights at 3–4 months and bench press from 16 weeks.
Sports	Contact sports and unrestricted activity at 5–6 months. Older tears or graft repairs take ~6 weeks longer.
► 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 and procedure: Pectoralis Tendon Tear** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/diseases--conditions/pectoralis-tendon-tear/>

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

<https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/activity/2528403-pectoralis-major-tendon-tears> (or browse <https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/catalog>).