



The Johns Hopkins Hospital Patient Information

Original Date
Your Department
Date 5/10/10

Instructions for Wearing Your Shoulder Immobilizer Brace

Revised/ Reviewed
Nelson 8

Why do I need an immobilizer?

The shoulder immobilizer you have been given is designed to support your arm, but also to protect you from doing certain motions. It is also to protect your arm from other people pulling on or against the arm and to protect the arm at night, so you do not sleep on it wrong or move it in the wrong position.

You should wear the brace at all times except when showering or doing your exercises. When showering or dressing it may be helpful to have a family member assist you in keeping your shoulder in the correct position when the brace is off. It is very important that you wear the immobilizer at night. You may sleep sitting up if you find this more comfortable.

The following instructions describe some helpful tips for using your immobilizer and how to apply it. If you do not understand these instructions prior to leaving the hospital, please make sure to discuss this with the nurse or physical therapist. It is very important that you know how to use the immobilizer at home.

Using the Immobilizer

We recommend that you not apply the immobilizer directly to your skin as this can cause a rash. Instead, we recommend you put on a T-shirt or button down shirt first, then apply the brace. This shirt will also keep the cold from freezing your skin if you are using the iceman device for pain relief.

It is also important to keep a small washcloth or towel under the armpit to keep this area clean and dry. If you do not, then occasionally the area can get a fungal infection or rash from an excess of moisture.

While wearing your brace, we usually recommend that you put a pillow behind your elbow when sitting or laying down for comfort. This keeps your elbow from moving behind your back, which is a position that can damage your surgical repair.



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Parts of the Immobilizer

The shoulder immobilizer has 4 parts: a large chest band/strap, an upper arm cuff, a hand/wrist cuff, and an over the shoulder strap. The pictures below show the different pieces that will be placed together to apply the shoulder immobilizer. Steps 1 through 8 will describe how to apply these pieces.



Large Chest Strap/Band



Upper Arm Cuff

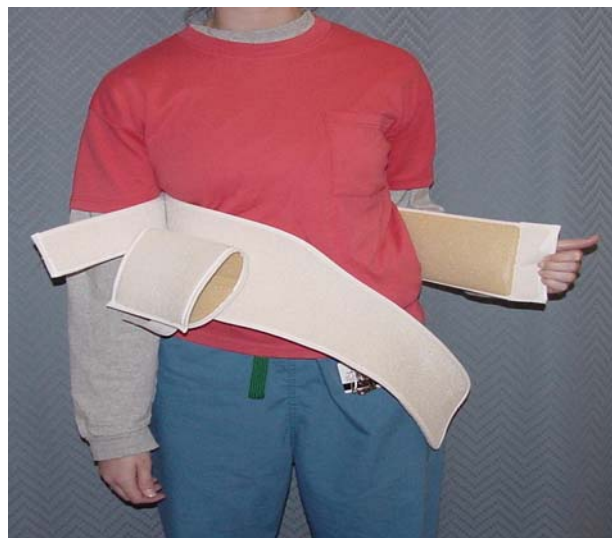


Hand/Wrist Strap



Over the Shoulder Strap

Step 1



Place large chest strap around your chest, just below the nipple line, with the Velcro pointing towards the shoulder you had surgery on. This position allows you to remove the brace with your good arm. It is often easiest to apply the chest strap in the sitting position with the shoulder supported.



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Step 2



Secure Velcro tightly around the chest.

Steps 3 & 4



Bend your elbow to 90° and secure the wrist/hand with the velcro hand/wrist cuff.



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Make sure wrist is held tightly with the Velcro and secured against the chest wall.

Steps 3 & 4 (wrist cuff) and 5 & 6 (arm strap) can be interchanged.

Steps 5 & 6



Wrap the upper arm cuff around the biceps with the long piece of Velcro pulled to the front.



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Secure the arm strap across the body by placing the Velcro tightly above wrist strap.

Steps 3 & 4 (wrist cuff) and 5 & 6 (arm strap) can be interchanged.

Step 7



Finally, the over the shoulder strap should be attached to the back of the chest strap, brought over the non-injured shoulder, and attached to the front of the immobilizer.



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Step 8



The hand should
rest comfortably in
the loop of the over
the shoulder strap.

Questions...

If you have problems with your brace, please discuss this with your nurse or physical therapist prior to leaving the hospital. Once you leave the hospital, please call the surgeon's office during office hours at 410-581-2850.