Wearing a Shoulder Sling and Foam Pillow

A shoulder sling is used to support your arm after injury or surgery. It may also be used to limit movement or to raise the arm to reduce pain and swelling.

The foam pillow is used to keep your arm in a comfortable resting position for healing. The pillow fits between your body and your arm in the sling. It is held in place by a belt that fits around your body.

Wear your sling and pillow as directed by your doctor, nurse or therapist.

Wear your sling and pillow:

- All the time until your follow up appointment.
- As needed for comfort.
- During the day.
- At night while you sleep.
- Remove your sling and pillow each day to wash your arm or to do your exercises.

Care while wearing a sling and pillow

Unless you have been instructed otherwise, follow these general care guidelines:

- Adjust the strap on the sling to put your hand slightly higher than your elbow to reduce swelling.
- Be sure your elbow is back in the pocket of the sling as far as possible.
- Smooth the sling so there are no wrinkles along your arm that may cause irritation or sore spots on your skin.
- The pillow should fit under your breast and to your side under your injured arm.
- Remove the sling each day to wash your arm and shoulder. Use a damp washcloth to wash your armpit and skin. Dry well with a towel. Limit movement of your injured arm.
- Exercise your fingers, wrist and elbow three times each day on the injured arm. This will keep your muscles and joints working well. Ask about range of motion exercises for your fingers, wrist and elbow.
- Your sling and cover on the pillow can be hand washed and air-dried. You may need to purchase another sling to wear while one is being cleaned.
Putting on the sling

Your sling will have:

- A strap that fits over your shoulder and back.
- A pouch or pocket to hold your elbow and lower arm.

How to put on the sling:

1. Start by sliding the closed end of the sling over your hand on the injured side.
2. Fit the sling on your arm, so your elbow is back in the pocket as far it can go.
3. The long strap of the sling should go from the back of your injured arm, across your back to your other shoulder and down your chest.
   - or -
   If you are not able to work the strap around, you may attach the strap to the fastener, and then lift the strap over your head to the opposite shoulder.
4. Attach the long strap to the fastener on the sling near your wrist.
5. Adjust the length of the strap to keep your hand slightly above the level of your elbow.
6. Move the pad on the shoulder strap near your neck so it feels comfortable.

Putting on the pillow

1. The pillow attaches to your sling by Velcro strips. You can leave the pillow and sling attached when you remove it, so you do not need to adjust it to fit the next time.
2. The pillow has a wider end that fits toward your front, under your breast on the injured arm side. The other end of the pillow fits around your side.
3. There is a long strap that acts as a belt. Pull it around your body, and it attaches to itself with Velcro.
4. You may need someone to help you get the belt strap in place.
Taking off the shoulder sling and pillow

1. Loosen the belt holding the pillow around your body.
2. Loosen the sling strap from itself and take the strap out of the connector loop.
3. Pull the pocket end of the sling down off your elbow.
4. Slide the sling under and out towards the hand on your injured arm.