

Wearing a Shoulder Sling



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

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

When to wear the sling

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

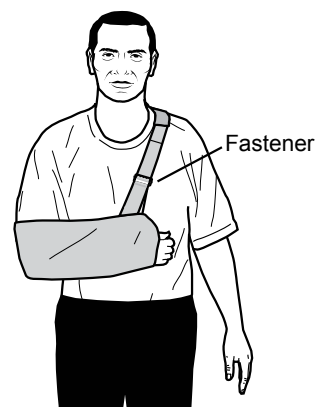
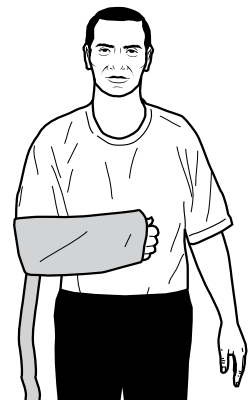
Putting on the sling

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.



Taking off the sling

- Loosen the fastener and take the strap out.
- Gently remove the sling from the injured arm.

Care while wearing the sling

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

- Adjust the strap on the sling to keep your hand slightly higher than your elbow. This helps reduce swelling.
- Be sure your elbow is back in the pocket of the sling as far as possible.
- Smooth out the sling, so there are no wrinkles along your arm that may cause sore spots on your skin.
- 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.
- Ask about exercises for your fingers, wrist and elbow.
- Your sling can be hand washed and air dried. You may need to purchase another sling to wear while one is being cleaned.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.