

An easier way to repair shoulders

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NEWS

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 27, 2007 (KGO) (KGO) -- It's the kind of injury that can happen to anyone, but there is a new fix for repairing torn tendons in your shoulder.

"When it first started getting really bad I couldn't even brush my teeth because I had to take my other hand and assist myself to raise my arm," said shoulder surgery patient Regina King.

Regina King is a special ed. school teacher suffering from a torn rotator cuff in her shoulder. So she went to CPMC orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Halbrecht for a new kind of surgery.

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"Historically rotator cuff repair have been one of the more difficult surgeries that we do as orthopedic surgeons and had long, prolong recovery and painful post-operative course," said orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Halbrecht.

With a standard rotator cuff injury, doctors normally make a large incision through the deltoid muscle in the shoulder to reach the torn tendon and sew it back in place. Dr. Halbrecht has invented a simpler, minimally-invasive way to do the same thing.

"So this is a Versalok Anchor," said Dr. Halbrecht.

He uses a device called "Versalok" to more quickly anchor sutures and ligaments to the bone.

"Were looking at the ball and socket joint,"

said Dr. Halbrecht.

Dr. Halbrecht begins Regina's surgery by cleaning the site where the Versalok will be implanted. Then he preloads sutures into the device before he begins tapping the Versalok into place

"So it's basically almost like a rivet or a fancy staple device that allows the rotator cuff fixed to bone and to tension the sutures to just the perfect amount to allow compression of the tendon onto the bone," said Dr. Halbrecht.

After sliding the sutures around the torn tendon, he can pull it into place. The result: less time in surgery and quicker recovery.

"They've been able to get back to their activities um with seemingly to me less pain and uh excellent recovery," said Dr. Halbrecht.

Ruth Freeman is one of his successes.

"It's just a miracle to me what he's accomplished," said shoulder surgery patient Ruth Freeman.

Ruth plays the viola professionally, but a tear in her rotator cuff had incapacitated her. On her 75th birthday recital, she could barely hold up her instrument.

"During that recital I saw that I was going lower and lower and what I was doing was supporting the arm with my body. Well that inhibits the motion and so the pills and will power got me through but I was definitely injured," said Freeman.

Dr. Halbrecht operated on her using Versalock.

"There was an immediate improvement that I could go up, and I was playing again in three months. I'm now able to do the things musically that I love so much and that I've done all my life. It's given me back my self esteem, my reason for being," said Freeman.

The Versalock Anchor has been available since April and doctors from the U.S., Europe, and Australia are using it.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Versalok Anchor.

[Versalok Anchor Web site](#)

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