

**STEVEN CHUDIK MD**  

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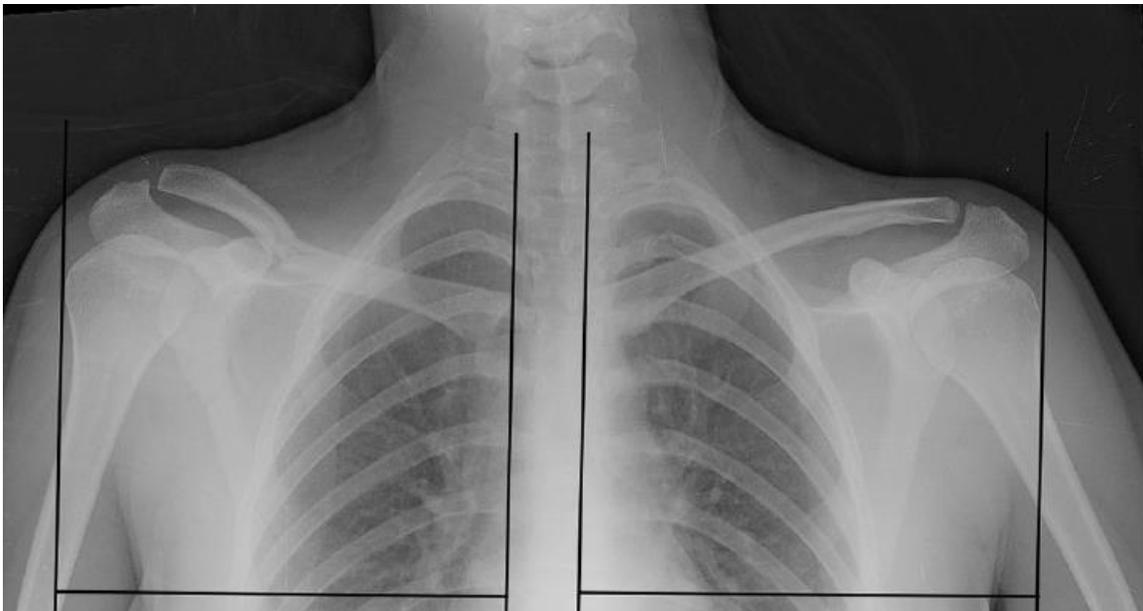
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**SHOULDER, KNEE & SPORTS MEDICINE**

## Floating Shoulder Surgery

### Indications for Surgery

Floating shoulder describes a condition where a combination of fractures of the scapula (glenoid [socket] neck) and the clavicle fracture result in structural separation of the shoulder joint and arm from the shoulder girdle. It also is referred to as a double disruption of the superior shoulder suspensory complex. This is a rare injury that results most commonly from major trauma, such as a fall from a significant height or a motor vehicle accident. Depending on the stability of the injuries, some floating shoulders can be treated non-operatively, some may require fixation of the clavicle alone while others are best treated with open reduction and internal fixation of both the clavicle and scapula fractures. Fixation of either or both bones is indicated only when both are significantly displaced.



X-ray of a patient with a floating shoulder. The right shoulder (seen on left) shows a scapular neck and clavicle fracture, while the left shoulder (seen on right) appears normal.



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### Potential Surgical Risks and Complications

- Infection
- Rarely, injury to nerves of the shoulder, arm, or hand
- Breakage of internal fixation devices
- Shoulder stiffness
- Persistent pain with activities
- Need for revision surgery
- Malunion
- Nonunion

### Hospitalization and Anesthesia

- Outpatient surgery (go home the same day, no hospital admission)
- General anesthetic with interscalene block (refer to “*Your Surgical Experience*” booklet)

### General Surgical Technique

For displaced and unstable fractures, Dr. Chudik performs limited, open reduction and fixation of either one or both fractures of the clavicle or scapula. In many cases, reducing and fixing the clavicle with a plate and screws sufficiently stabilizes the scapula fracture to allow sufficient early motion and healing. In other cases where both fractures are unstable, Dr. Chudik will expose them and fix through separate incisions.

### Post-Operative Course

- Patients will use a sling at all times except for bathing, dressing and exercises for six weeks following surgery, especially while sleeping.
- Patients may feel more comfortable sleeping sitting upright (on a couch or recliner chair) after surgery.
- Keep the wound clean and dry for ten to 14 days following open surgery. Patients may shower lightly two weeks after open surgery, but wounds cannot be submerged under water for three weeks.
- Driving after six weeks (once out of sling)
- Return to school/sedentary work in less than one week as long as sling is worn
- Physical therapy should begin two to three days after surgery and continue for four to six months. The success of shoulder surgery is highly dependent on the post-operative rehabilitation. It is crucial to follow through and maintain a proper therapy schedule.



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### Return to Activity

- The time to return depends on the type of activity, sport, and position, as well as the arm injured (dominant versus non-dominant)
- At least four to six months is required after surgery before return to sports/strenuous labor
- Full shoulder motion and strength are necessary before returning to sports/strenuous labor

### Preoperative Instructions

- Discontinue birth control pills
- Stop blood thinners such as aspirin, Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Lovenox<sup>®</sup>, Xarelto<sup>®</sup> according to the prescribing doctor's directions
- Stop anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen, Advil<sup>®</sup>, Naprosyn<sup>®</sup>, Alleve<sup>®</sup>, etc.)
- Stop nutritional supplements and drinks like Vitamin C, ginseng, ginkgo biloba, etc.
- Stop smoking for surgery and during the first six weeks postoperatively to allow proper tissue healing

### Do not eat or drink anything from midnight, the evening before surgery

### Scheduling Surgery

Contact Dr. Chudik's surgery scheduler at 630-324-0402 or [contactus@chudikmd.com](mailto:contactus@chudikmd.com) to:

- Schedule the date and location of surgery (the hospital will call the day before with the confirmed arrival time)
- Schedule a pre-operative appointment
- Schedule a post-operative appointment to remove sutures and review post-operative instructions

### Notify My Office if Symptoms Worsen

