

Stabilisation of the shoulder joint



Physiotherapy Department

Information leaflet for

Name of Patient:

Date:

Name of Physiotherapist:

Telephone: 01483 464153

This leaflet is designed to help prepare you both mentally and physically before you come into hospital for your shoulder surgery.

Please read this booklet carefully and ask your pre-assessment nurse or physiotherapist if you are unsure about any information or instructions.

Remember once you have had your operation it is up to you, with guidance from your physiotherapist, to follow the precautions and to carry out the exercises regularly in order to achieve the optimum results.

What is stabilisation of the shoulder joint?

Stabilisation of the shoulder joint is performed when there is instability of the joint resulting in recurrent dislocations. This is normally due to damage of soft tissues at the front of the shoulder.

Surgical treatment is performed either through an arthroscope (a small telescope that is inserted into the joint) or as an open procedure where the shoulder is opened up through an incision at the front of the shoulder.

The procedure is to secure the torn or stretched soft tissue at the front of the shoulder joint to help prevent it from re-dislocating.

What is the expected outcome?

The end result should be a return to all activities including collision sport after about six months. The reported re-dislocation rate after surgery is reduced to approximately 14%.

What are the complications that might occur?

Complications are rare but as with all surgery do exist. In the early stages these include infection or damage to adjacent structures (nerves and blood vessels). In the later stages re-dislocation or arthritis could occur.

Is there any alternative treatment?

Physiotherapy to strengthen the shoulder muscles may be useful.

Your stay in hospital

You will probably stay in hospital the night of the operation and go home the following morning, you will need someone to escort you home. If you live alone it may also be wise to arrange for a friend or relative to stay with you for a couple of days afterwards.

For your stay in hospital you may find it useful to wear front fastening nightwear and to bring in front fastening or loose fitting clothes to wear for going home as these are easier to put on and take off.

What will happen during and after the operation?

The operation is usually performed under a combination of a general anaesthetic to put you to sleep and a local anaesthetic to temporarily numb the arm.

You will return to the ward with your arm in a sling. This is worn the whole time day and night for three weeks taking it off only for washing and dressing then at night only for a further three weeks.

A structured physiotherapy programme commences from the first day. Initially this consists of very gentle exercises to prevent the arm from getting stiff meanwhile allowing time for the surgical repair to heal. This is gradually progressed over the next three months until good movement and strength are obtained.

Ice

Use Ice packs to help reduce pain and post operative swelling.

Wrap 1 large pack of frozen peas or an ice pack in a tea towel and place over the shoulder. *Leave for 15–20 minutes.*

Repeat 3–4 times a day.

Replace the ice pack in the freezer to use only on the shoulder again. **Do not use ice if you have circulatory or sensation deficits.**

First day

On the day after your operation you will be seen by a physiotherapist on the ward who will instruct you as to how to remove your sling for washing and dressing and to show you your first exercises. You will need to practice these at regular intervals throughout the day whilst in hospital and when you go home.

Exercises

Aim to complete the exercises below 3-4 times a day.

1. Bend and straighten your fingers as often as you can throughout the day.
2. Remove sling, bend your elbow and straighten it fully. *Repeat 20 times.*

When you leave hospital

On discharge from hospital you will be given an appointment to begin physiotherapy and slowly progress your exercises at approximately three weeks following the surgery.

Stitches, if used, will be removed between 10 and 14 days at your GP's surgery. If stitches are not used but steristrips are under the dressing you may peel these off at 10 days after the surgery. The nurses will advise you before you go home. The wound will have to be kept dry and protected until it is healed.

An appointment will also be made for you to be seen by the surgeon's team in clinic.

Driving

You will be unable to drive for at least six weeks after the operation. Check with your doctor when you come for your follow up clinic appointment. You are also advised to check with your insurance company before you begin driving again.

Work and sport

You can return to office based work still in a sling after two to four weeks.

Manual workers will have to avoid heavy work for at least three months.

Non contact sport e.g. swimming and gym work can be resumed at about three months unless you are advised otherwise by your doctor or physiotherapist.

Contact or racquet sports eg football, hockey, rugby, tennis, horse riding must be avoided for at least six months.

If in doubt discuss activities with your physiotherapist or surgeon.

If you have any further questions

Once you have returned home if you have any further questions or concerns please telephone the ward. They will do their best to help you or direct you.

This booklet is intended as a guide and a reminder.

All points will be covered by your physiotherapist during your stay in hospital and your outpatient physiotherapist when you start treatment. Each patient's individual needs vary and so you will be guided personally through your rehabilitation.

Reference source(s):

www.guildfordupperlimb.co.uk

Contact details

Royal Surrey County Hospital

Telephone: 01483 571122

Physiotherapy

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PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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