

# Shoulder replacement



## Physiotherapy Department

# Information booklet for

**Name of Patient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Physiotherapist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone: 01483 464153** \_\_\_\_\_

This booklet 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 a Shoulder Replacement?**

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A total shoulder replacement is a procedure offered to relieve the pain associated with arthritis of the shoulder joint. Surgical treatment is replacement of the head of the humerus (the ball part of the joint) with a metal implant. Occasionally the socket may also be replaced depending on the degree of wear.

It is not only the bones that are affected by arthritis and trauma. Often the muscles and tendons around the shoulder joint have become damaged. The degree of soft tissue involvement prior to surgery will affect the overall outcome of shoulder movement after surgery.

## **What is the expected outcome?**

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The end result should be a shoulder which has less or no pain and equal or improved range of movement compared to before surgery.

## **What are the complications that might occur?**

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

## **Are there any alternative treatments?**

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Without surgery the option of taking painkillers may be an alternative treatment.

## **Your stay in hospital**

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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 few 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.

## The operation

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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 specific exercises to gently move the shoulder without stressing the muscles or the newly operated joint. This is gradually progressed over the course of several weeks.

## First day

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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

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

1. Bend and straighten your fingers as much as possible throughout the day.
2. Remove sling, bend your elbow and straighten it fully for 20 repetitions.
3. Pendular Exercise:

- Remove sling.
- Lean forwards, supporting yourself with your non-operated arm let your operated arm hang down.
- Try to bend at the waist so that your arm can hang forwards with your elbow straight as far as is comfortable.
- Let the arm hang for 2 or 3 minutes.



## Ice

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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.**

## What happens when I leave hospital?

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You will be given an appointment to begin physiotherapy and slowly progress your exercises at approximately three weeks following the surgery.

Stitches will be removed between 10 and 14 days at your GP's surgery. The wound will have to be kept dry and protected until it is healed. If the wound becomes red, inflamed or oozes contact your doctor immediately.

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

## Driving

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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

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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. golf and swimming can be resumed between four and six months unless you are advised otherwise by your doctor or physiotherapist.

If in doubt discuss activities with your physiotherapist or surgeon.



## Contact details

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### Royal Surrey County Hospital

**Telephone:** 01483 571122

### Physiotherapy Department

**Telephone:** 01483 464153

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### PALS and Advocacy contact details

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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](mailto: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.

Past review date: September 2016

Future review date: September 2019

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**PIN160708–1090**

