

Tennis Elbow Release

Day Surgery Unit

Surgical Short Stay Unit



Patient information leaflet

What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow is another name for a condition called 'lateral epicondylitis' which is inflammation of the bony protuberance at the elbow. It can be caused by a repetitive activity involving the muscles of the forearm, hence its association with tennis.

The condition usually causes pain and tenderness at the elbow that may radiate down the arm on certain movements.

What does surgery involve?

An incision is made on the outside of the elbow. The tendon underneath is released from the bone, allowing the forearm muscle to relax or 'lengthen'. This allows the inflamed areas to properly heal. The skin is then stitched and the elbow bandaged. The bandage will help reduce swelling.

What are the potential risks and complications?

Complications during and following this procedure are rare. They include:

- A build-up of blood within the joint, which can be painful and sometimes requires surgical drainage.
- Infection of the joint or wound sites.
- Excessive swelling or bleeding. Keeping the joint elevated will help to prevent this.
- Damage to the skin nerves over the joint can occur, leading to small areas of numbness.
- Damage to the structures in the joint including the cartilage, tendons and ligaments.

If you have any concerns following your surgery, contact your GP, or the staff on the Day Surgery Unit.

What alternatives are available?

There are many treatments available, including physiotherapy, steroid injections and anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen. However, if these treatments prove unsuccessful, surgery can be performed to release tension in the tendon over the elbow joint.

What happens after my surgery?

Will the surgery hurt?

The joint may be uncomfortable after your procedure. Painkillers will be given on the Unit as required. You will also need to take painkillers for a few days. The painkillers dispensed from the Unit carry a prescription charge, unless you are exempt.

Wound care and stitches

You will be sent home with your arm in a sling. For the next few days you must rest the elbow, but keep your wrist and fingers moving to prevent stiffness. After two days you may remove the bandage.

Your stitches will be removed at your outpatients appointment in two weeks' time. Keep your stitches covered, clean and dry until they have been removed.

Activity

Once your stitches have been removed you may use your elbow as much as is comfortable. Avoid any movement that causes pain. You may gradually return to normal activities as you heal; this may take several months.

Work

You are advised to take at least two weeks off work to allow you to recover from your surgery. Depending on the nature of your work you may need longer than this. Please be advised by nurses on the Unit.

The Unit can provide you with a doctor's certificate if required.

Driving

You must not drive until your stitches have been removed. You must be comfortable and able to use your arm normally before driving again. This may take 2-4 weeks.

How can I prevent the symptoms recurring?

Several measures can be taken to prevent symptoms recurring in the future. These include:

- Adequate rest between activities.
- Rest your muscles during exercise if they become sore – always stop whenever you feel pain.
- Always include a proper warm-up and cool down before and after any activity, including manual labour.
- If your injury is work related, seek advice from an occupational therapist regarding the correct tools and techniques.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

The date and time of your outpatients appointment will be sent to you through the post.

Reference source

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/tennis-elbow

Contact details

If you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Day Surgery Unit

Telephone: 01483 406783 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

Surgical Short Stay Unit

Telephone: 01483 406828 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm)

Out of hours advice

Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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–3.00pm, 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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