
PATIENT INFORMATION – SHOULDER PROBLEMS

What causes shoulder problems/pain?

There are a number of reasons why you might be experiencing shoulder problems/pain, which include:

- poor posture
- osteoarthritis of the shoulder joint
- a broken bone such as a fracture of the humerus or the collarbone.
- a shoulder disorder

The following advice should help:

LIMIT ACTIVITIES AND REST – Do not carry out any activities that increase pain. Rest your arm in a position which gives you the most relief. This could be with your arm across your lap supported underneath by a cushion or perhaps if you are lying down, across your chest on a pillow. Depending on what is causing your shoulder pain, you may need to avoid certain activities or movements that may make your symptoms worse. Try to avoid movements that are most painful but you should continue using your shoulder for other activities where possible.

SUPPORT – You may have been given a sling or ‘collar and cuff’ to use. Some people find these uncomfortable around their neck. You may find it better to use it when you are walking about and take it off when you are sitting or lying down and resting it as suggested above.

EXERCISE – If you have shoulder pain, it is important to keep your shoulder joint mobile by doing gentle, regular exercise. Not using your shoulder can cause your muscles to waste away and may make any stiffness worse. Therefore, if possible, you should continue using your shoulder as normal. If your shoulder is very stiff, exercise may be

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painful. Your GP or physiotherapist can give you some exercises that you can do without further damaging your shoulder.

Painkillers* can also be used to ease pain.

Further Advice/Instructions

Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.

***Pain relief advice**

You may have been given some pain relief by the health professionals in the Accident and Emergency Department. If this runs out and you need further pain relief, you can speak to a pharmacist for advice. Some common painkillers are available to buy over the counter, for e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen. Always follow the instructions on the packet if you are taking these, and seek further advice from the pharmacist should you have any concerns, particularly if it is for a child.

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If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the choose well website at www.choosewellwales.org.uk

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk