

Injuries to the shoulder and upper arm are very painful, even if you have not broken a bone. They usually heal with little treatment. You may need to use a sling. This might be a collar and cuff, broad arm sling or a shoulder immobiliser.

General advice

- The sling should be worn 24 hours a day unless you have been told not to.
- Take regular painkillers to help the discomfort.
- If it is difficult to sleep with the sling on, rest your arm on a pillow or two at your side. You may sleep better sitting up to start with.
- If the sling is rubbing put talcum powder on the skin under the sling. Tying the knot to the side stops it rubbing on your neck.
- An old T-shirt, split up one side, can help stop the sling rubbing against your body.
- If not injured, you must keep your hand, wrist and elbow moving to stop them getting stiff.

Fractures and dislocations

Depending on the injury, you will be given an appointment to come to the Shoulder Clinic or Fracture Clinic. Make sure you have an appointment card from reception before you go home.

The doctor at the clinic will tell you when to start moving your shoulder and how long you will need the sling for.

Muscle tears

The pain from a muscle tear is often as bad as a break. It is very important to rest the shoulder. If you move it too much or too soon, then you might stop it healing properly. It is a good idea to start some gentle movements as soon as the pain allows, so you avoid stiffness. It can take a few weeks of rest to heal a muscle injury to the shoulder.

Bruising and swelling

Bruises and swelling can be dramatic after a shoulder injury. Applying something frozen for 15 minutes every 2 hours can help reduce these. Try using a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice. Make sure you wrap the peas or ice in a towel first to stop it damaging the skin. **Do not apply ice if you are diabetic or have broken skin over the affected area.**

Do not eat food that has been defrosted then refrozen.

It is normal to get a bit of swelling further down your arm, even into the fingers. Remove any rings from the affected hand while you can.

Seek medical advice if you develop the following:

- numbness in your fingers
- tingling in your fingers
- discolouration in your hand

For more information contact:

- Emergency Department 01535 294481
- NHS 111 111, or 111.nhs.uk
- The NHS website www.nhs.uk

Notes:

Are you a victim of Domestic Violence? For confidential advice, contact:

Bradford	0808 2800 999	https://www.stayingput.uk.net/contact
North Yorkshire	03000 110 110	https://www.idas.org.uk/
Lancashire	0300 323 0085	https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/domestic-abuse/

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01535 294019

Author: Emergency Department
Date of publication: April 2011
Revised: February 2022
Date of review: February 2025

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