

# Patient Information - Shoulder Surgery

**Shoulder Surgery**

**Patient information leaflet**

**Surgery and Critical Care**

Darent Valley Hospital

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[www.dgt.nhs.uk](http://www.dgt.nhs.uk)

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Title: Shoulder Surgery

Information accurate at time of going to print.

## **About your operation**

**Shoulder Arthroscopy** - examination of the interior of the shoulder joint. A specially designed camera is inserted through a small incision in the back of your shoulder to assess the extent of any damage. Further incisions may be made in order to trim, repair and wash out the damaged areas.

**Subacromial decompression/painful arc syndrome** - The shoulder joint, then the bony tunnel on which the tendons are pinched, are examined arthroscopically. The tendon can get pinched if the tunnel is narrowed or the tendon swollen. Surgery is performed to undo the tunnel to prevent further pinching and damage to the tendon.

**Rotator Cuff Repair** - The rotator cuff consists of four muscles and their tendons which allow movement of the shoulder joint, assisting other muscles during reach and preventing the shoulder from dislocating. This cuff is vulnerable to getting pinched or trapped or through overuse is vulnerable to being torn.

All shoulder surgery is performed under a general anaesthetic.

### **What should I do before my operation?**

Now your Consultant has agreed with you to undergo this procedure it is important to follow the advice on your admission letter and that given by the Pre-Admission Assessment Nurse and the booklet you have been provided with.

You should refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol for 48 hours prior to your operation. Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to improve your surgical outcomes and future health. Darent Valley and Queen Mary Hospitals are smoke free sites. If you are experiencing nicotine withdrawal symptoms whilst in our care, please ask staff about nicotine replacement therapy to keep you comfortable, and a referral to your local NHS stop smoking service.

Please follow the pre-operative fasting instructions given by the pre-admission nurse specifically for day surgical procedures to aid recovery.

### **After a general anaesthetic, what arrangements do I need to make?**

Even though you may feel quite normal, there is a period following a general anaesthetic or sedation in which your judgement, performance and reaction are impaired. Therefore, it is important that a friend or relative must collect you from the hospital. Unless identified prior to admission as someone who

is suitable to be at home alone, you must have someone to stay with you for the next 24 hours. If you are unable to provide a suitable carer, your operation may be postponed or cancelled.

You must not drive yourself home, or travel by public transport. You may use a taxi with your escort. Due to the effects, you should not drink alcohol, drive a car, ride a bicycle, operate machinery, use electrical equipment, sign legal documents or do anything particularly dangerous for 24 hours. Smoking may cause dizziness and is discouraged.

### **What do I need to bring in with me to hospital on the day of my operation?**

Dressing gown and slippers and if you have any suitable comfortable trousers, i.e. tracksuit or jogging trousers and something to read. Remove as much jewellery as possible and leave it at home. Please do not bring large amounts of money or debit/credit cards into hospital. The Trust is not responsible for valuables. For health and safety, reasons please remove any false nails, nail varnish and make up.

### **Relatives, Friends and Carers**

We request that all visitors leave the unit once the patient has been dropped off, unless there is a specific clinical or mental health need which needs to be identified to the nurses. The reason for this is that we promote single sex accommodation for all of our patients.

### **Pain Relief and side effects**

Please follow the pain relief advice leaflet given by your pre- assessment nurse. During your anaesthetic, you will be given pain-relieving medicines and anti-sickness medication. After your operation, your nurse will give you more pain relief medication as necessary. Do not let your pain build up and please tell the nurse if you are experiencing pain. Please ensure you have a stock of your usual painkillers at home.

If you are feeling nausea, please let the nurse looking after you know. They can then provide you with further medication to help with this.

You may feel some discomfort and swelling after your operation. This is normal and will reduce over the next few days.

### **What do I need to do after the operation?**

An outer pressure dressing will be applied to your shoulder. Each Orthopaedic Consultant has different preferences and your nurse will advise you accordingly. You may be asked to make an appointment to see your GP practice nurse 48 hours following your surgery to remove the outer dressings, or these may be removed prior to your discharge by your nurse. The small inner dressings should remain in place or changed and kept dry until your outpatient appointment. Your arm will be elevated in a sling for a period of time dependant upon the extent of your surgery.

### **Wound Management**

It is important to reduce the risk of infection that you follow the instructions given on the Orthopaedic Consultant's advice sheets. Generally, you must not get the affected leg wet until after the stitches have been removed. There may be some slight swelling around the joint.

### **How long will I need time off work?**

Time off work will depend upon the outcome of the surgery and your type of work. Normally this will be about two - six weeks. Your surgeon will advise you and issue a medical certificate if appropriate.

You should not drive any vehicle for at least two weeks, and may not be insured whilst you have stitches in., which could affect your reactions.

Return to sporting activities will depend upon your surgery and will be discussed at your outpatient's appointment.

To improve the circulation in the arm and prevent complications and stiffness, you will be given exercises to do. You may or may not be seen by the Physiotherapist prior to discharge. Exercises will differ considerably

depending upon your procedure, which will affect the amount of shoulder and movement allowed. Generally these fall into two categories - movement of the lower arm only with little movement to the upper arm, or a wider range of movement with movement of the whole arm below shoulder level. You will be advised accordingly.

### **Who do I contact if I have any problems?**

If you are anxious about your condition, do not be afraid to ask for advice, however small your worry may seem. If you feel unwell, this could be the anaesthetic affecting you and your GP will be able to help you. If it is problems with circulation, “pins and needles” sensation, numbness, cold, colour changes, swelling or bleeding please contact either:

- If you were a patient at Darent Valley Hospital , please telephone 01322 428100 and ask for the ward you was discharged from.
- If you were a patient at Queen Mary’s Hospital, Sidcup, please telephone 0208 302 2678 Telephone your G.P. or Practice Nurse
- Telephone 111

We hope your stay with us was pleasant, but if are dissatisfied with any aspect of your care, please contact the Ward Manager.

**This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners**

## **Patient Information**

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

# Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: [dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## Patient Property

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/)

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: [www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

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