



Making decisions with my healthcare professional: Shoulder problems for people aged 16 and over

Thinking about a referral

Use this tool to prepare for appointments, during appointments, or both.

Sharing information about my condition

Name:

.....

I think that my shoulder problems are due to: (Please write below)

.....

.....

Today, I hope that we can:

.....

.....

I would like some help with: (please circle what matters most to you)

Activity



Family and friends



Mobility



Pain



Sleep



Mental wellbeing



Work and finance



Fatigue



.....

.....

.....

What is likely to happen with my shoulder problems?

Shoulder pain varies a lot among people. Most people can manage their shoulder problems with simple treatments. These include exercise or medication.

About 6 out of every 10 people recover from their shoulder pain in less than 6 months. Shoulder problems take longer to get better for about 4 out of every 10 people. These people may need more treatments.

Understanding my options

Can we please talk about my options?

What can I do myself?



Being active



How I feel



Healthy weight



Community groups

What adjustments might help me?



House and home



At work



Getting around



Managing with money

What types of tests and treatments might help?



Physical therapies



Mental health



Medicines and other treatments



Tests and scans

General Questions:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of these options?

How much better will I feel, and when?

What practical things should I know?

Should I choose one option or try several?

Notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What should I do?

People who stay active or go to work with shoulder problems recover faster and have less pain than people who rest.

Understanding my treatment options

What does the evidence say about shoulder pain?

After a healthcare professional has diagnosed your shoulder problems, you can discuss these options with them to find out if they are right for you. If you would like to explore some alternatives before going ahead with the options below, please ask for *Shoulder pain: primary and self care*.

Tests and scans

If a person's shoulder problems do not get better, they may need an X-ray. Most of the time, people do not need more scans before a referral.

Supervised exercise and manual (hands-on) therapies

If home exercise does not help, a person may get more help from an individual exercise programme supervised by a physiotherapist or other professional. Over 6 months, this can help with pain and function more than using an exercise leaflet. At first, exercise may make pain worse, but this does not mean that the shoulder is being damaged. It's best to start with a small amount of activity and build up. People may get some more help, at least in the short term, from manual therapies combined with exercise.

Injections given by a specialist

For most people with shoulder pain, an injection from a specialist is no better than the injections that your GP or physio can do. All injections have a small risk of complications such as pain, infection, bleeding or bruising.

Nerve blocks

Some people with shoulder pain get help for up to 3 months with injections or other treatments that block the nerves to the shoulder. There is a small risk of complications.

Shoulder surgery

Surgery may help some people who have conditions such as arthritis, tendon damage, or a frozen shoulder. Surgery is for people who have pain that has lasted a long time and who have already tried simpler treatments that have not helped. People who are older or have other health problems are more likely to have complications with surgery. Most people with shoulder pain will not need surgery, as other treatments will improve their pain, function and quality of life.

Some people's shoulder problems may be caused by conditions that need other kinds of treatment. Your healthcare professional will explain options recommended by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, or NICE. This will help you make a decision together about what is best for you.

Sharing decisions

Please complete this section together with your healthcare professional.

- ☐ I would like to make some decisions today
- ☐ I would like to talk to my family and/or friends before making a decision
- ☐ I would like to make another appointment
- ☐ I would like to have more information

We agreed that:

I will:

.....
.....
.....

My healthcare professional will:

.....
.....
.....



I should come back to see a healthcare professional if:

.....
.....
.....

If I have a problem or a concern, I should contact: (name and contact details)

.....



I can find more information:

1. [nhs.uk/conditions/shoulder-pain/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/shoulder-pain/)
2. [arthritis-uk.org/shoulder-pain/](https://www.arthritis-uk.org/shoulder-pain/) or call our helpline on 0800 5200 520
3. [nice.org.uk/guidance/cg177/ifp/chapter/About-this-information](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg177/ifp/chapter/About-this-information)
4. [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or 03444 111 444
5. [fitforwork.org](https://www.fitforwork.org)

Local services I can access include:
.....

This decision support tool was developed by Arthritis UK with support from the Primary Care Centre Arthritis UK at Keele University and funding from NHS England. For information on the evidence sources used, please contact content@arthritis-uk.org