

- **Failure of surgery** or a need to **redo the surgery**. If your surgeon is unable to complete your surgery successfully or the repair fails, other options or further treatment can be discussed after your surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns about these complications, please speak to your surgeon either during your clinic appointment or before your surgery.

How long will I stay in hospital?

This procedure is usually carried out as a day operation, so you should be able to go home the same day.

After your operation, you will be taken to the ward until it is safe for you to be discharged home. You will be seen by your surgeon, surgical care practitioner, and/or physiotherapist before you go home. They will show you exercises to do and give further advice to guide you through your recovery.

If you need to stay in hospital overnight, this will usually be explained to you during your preassessment appointment. If you have to stay overnight, make sure you bring with you items you may need, such as hygiene items (toothpaste and toothbrush), a dressing gown, slippers, and your usual medication. Also, we suggest you bring a book or magazine, in case there is a delay.

Will I be in pain after my surgery?

This surgery may be uncomfortable, you will need appropriate pain relief in the period after your surgery. If your anaesthetist has given you a nerve block, your shoulder and arm may feel numb and weak. You may not feel any pain immediately after your surgery, as the block may take 12 to 24 hours to wear off completely.

However, it is very important that you take your pain relief as advised and as early as you can before the nerve block wears off; this will help you to keep on top of your discomfort. It is advisable to take your painkillers regularly for the first few days. If possible, avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen and naproxen, for at least 10 days before your surgery and six weeks following surgery. This is because anti-inflammatory medication could slow down the healing process.

Take pain relief regularly to try and keep your level of discomfort at a bearable level at all times. This allows the inflammation (redness, swelling, and heat) and pain to settle. **Do not wait until your shoulder is very painful to take the pain relief, as it is then more difficult to control.**

What painkillers will I be sent home with?

- Surgical patients might be given some of the following painkillers, depending on their age, body weight, and individual circumstances, unless told otherwise by their doctor.
- Take each painkiller as advised on your prescription.
 - Tablet paracetamol, 1g every four to six hours (no more than 4g per day).
 - Codeine Phosphate, 30 to 60mg every six to eight hours.
 - Tablet Tramadol, 50 to 100mg every eight hours.
 - Oramorph, 10 to 20mg every hour, as needed.
 - Anti-inflammatories may be prescribed; but you should try and take as few as possible immediately after your surgery.

Please note that Codeine, Oramorph, and Tramadol should not be taken together; you should only take one of the three at any one time.

Ice packs or bags of frozen peas may also help reduce your pain. Wrap the pack/bag with a cloth and place it on your shoulder for up to 15 minutes. Do not use these peas for eating once they have defrosted.

If your pain continues and is not controlled with the medication you have been advised to take, then please contact your GP. You may also contact the East Kent Upper Limb Team if you need further help.

If you notice your wound area is becoming more painful, red, hot, and/or discharging pus (thick yellow discharge), you may be developing an infection. Contact your GP or your surgical team for advice as soon as possible.

How do I care for my wound(s) at home?

If you had a repair through **keyhole surgery**, there will be few (three to five) wounds.

It is important to keep your wound and dressing dry and in place until your wound is well healed, and have your stitches removed at your two week follow-up appointment with your GP practice nurse or at the hospital, with your surgeon or your nurse practitioner (surgical care practitioner). You will be told where your follow-up appointment is going to be before you leave the hospital.

If the dressing gets wet or bloodstained, you can change them yourself by carefully placing a dressing from a pharmacy. If you are unable or have difficulties doing this yourself, you can ask a relative or a friend to change it for you, or you can make an appointment with your GP practice nurse to do it for you.

If you are being seen by your GP practice nurse for a wound check 10 to 14 days after your surgery, please make sure the nurse reads the following. These instructions are for healthy looking surgical wounds only.

- ***Colourful stitches are non-absorbable and need to be completely removed to avoid them getting buried under the patient's skin.**
- ***White/clear stitches are absorbable. If any suture knots have been made outside the patient's skin, please remove these to avoid suture abscesses. Thank you.**

***The appearance and material of the sutures can be different from Trust to Trust, but these are the most common.**

If a wound does not seem to be healing appropriately, please leave the stitches/knots in place and make another appointment to remove them in few days.

How long will my wound(s) take to heal?

Wounds usually take between 10 to 14 days to heal.

The area around your wounds may have some numbness, which is usually temporary. You may feel occasional sharp pains or 'twinges', as well as itching near your scar as it settles.

What if my wound bleeds at home?

There may be minor bleeding or clear fluid oozing from your wound in the first day or two following surgery. If your dressing gets wet or bloodstained, you may need to replace it. You can change this yourself by carefully placing a dressing from a pharmacy. If you are unable to or have difficulties doing this yourself, you can ask a relative or a friend to change for you, or you can arrange an appointment with your GP practice nurse to do it for you. You should be able to control this bleeding or oozing by pressing firmly but gently on your wound for 15 minutes.

If you are worried about the bleeding, you can contact the hospital on the number given to you (during normal working hours) or attend a walk-in centre or Emergency Department (after hours).

Can I have a bath or shower?

You should have a 'dry wash' or a shallow bath instead of a shower. This keeps your arm in the correct position and prevents your dressing and sling from becoming wet.

While your wound is still healing:

- do not use soaps, lotions, creams, or powders on your wounds, to avoid any infection getting into your wound(s); and
- keep your wound(s) dry at all times.

You can go back to normal cleaning routine once your wound is completely healed.

Why am I wearing a sling after my surgery?

You will return from surgery wearing a sling; this is usually used for the first couple of days following your surgery. The sling is only there to keep your arm comfortable. It may be taken off as much as you wish and discarded as soon as possible. We encourage you to use your arm.

If you had a repair during your surgery, you might need to use a sling for four to six weeks following your operation. The sling protects your repair while it heals. If this is the case, you will be given further instructions about how to wear your sling.

What is the best position to sleep in?

To begin with sleeping might be difficult. Take regular painkillers and try to support your shoulder with pillows, by placing them behind it. If you lie on your back, a pillow under your arm and elbow may make you feel more comfortable. You may also find it easy to lay on your non-operated side.

When can I drive again?

The advice from the DVLA is that you should not drive until you are physically capable of controlling a motor vehicle and can perform an emergency manoeuvre safely and confidently. This will take longer if any structures needed to be repaired during your surgery.

Please arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and take you home after your surgery.

When can I return to work?

You can return to work as soon as you feel able to. It will take longer to return if you had further surgery during your procedure. Your surgeon will advise you on the amount of time you will need to be away from work; you can ask for a sick note before you leave the hospital.

When can I start my normal daily activities?

These can be resumed as soon as you feel able. There are no restrictions but use soreness as your guide and stop if your shoulder feels uncomfortable.

An appointment will be made for you to see a physiotherapist after your discharge from hospital. This appointment will usually be three to four weeks after your surgery. You will be monitored by a physiotherapist throughout your rehabilitation.

Your physiotherapist can tailor your treatment depending on your personal objectives.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Before you leave the hospital, a follow-up appointment will be made for you at the Upper Limb Unit. At this appointment you will be reviewed by the physiotherapist, surgical care practitioner, or surgeon. They will check your progress, make sure you are moving your arm correctly, and give you further instructions and exercises as appropriate.

What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your surgical care practitioner, surgeon, or physiotherapist. Their contact details are listed on the last page of this leaflet.

If you notice your wound area is becoming more painful, red, hot, and/or discharging pus (thick yellow discharge) you may be developing an infection. Contact your GP or your surgical team for advice as soon as possible.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation

Contact details

• Consultants and their secretaries

Hospital site	Consultant	Secretary name	Contact number
Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury	The teams listed below work at Kent and Canterbury Hospital as well		
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	Mr Sathya Murthy	Tracy Blackman	01843 23 50 68
	Mr Georgios Arealis	Donna Cannon	01843 23 50 83
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	Mr Paolo Consigliere	Heather Littlejohn	01233 61 62 80
	Mr Jai Relwani	Dione Allen	01233 61 67 37
	Surgical Care Practitioner	Patricia Velazquez-Ruta	07929 37 53 81

• Physiotherapists

Hospital site	Physiotherapist	Contact number
Buckland Hospital, Dover	Abi Lipinski	01304 22 26 59
Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury	Sarah Gillett (inpatient)	01227 86 63 65
	Darren Base	01227 78 30 65
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	Caroline Phillpott (inpatient)	01843 23 45 75
	Martin Creasey	01843 23 50 96
Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone	Ailsa Sutherland	01303 85 44 10
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	Cindy Gabett (inpatient)	01233 63 33 31
	Chris Watts	01233 61 60 85

• Surgical Preassessment Units

Hospital site	Contact number
Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury	01227 78 31 14
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	01843 23 51 15
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	01233 61 67 43

• Fracture Clinics

Hospital site	Contact number
Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury	01227 78 30 75
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	01843 23 50 56
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	01233 61 68 49