



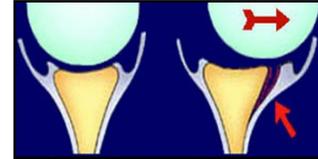
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SHOULDER INSTABILITY

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the problem with my shoulder?

Your shoulder is unstable. This is caused by loose or damaged tissues about the shoulder. The most common problem involves the tissue at the front of the joint. The labrum or soft tissue 'bumper' is stripped off the bone so that the ball can easily come out of the socket. With recurrent instability or severe injuries, bone loss may also occur.

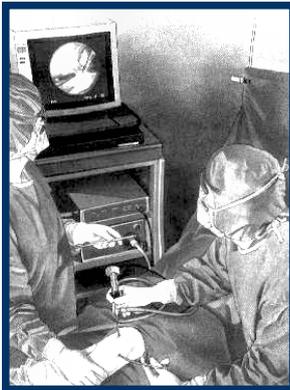


What is the treatment?

This depends upon age and activity level. If you are aged less than 40 and play sports you are more likely to require surgery. The soft tissue does not heal back in the correct position. If your shoulder feels unstable then surgery will be needed. Physiotherapy improves muscle strength but does not tighten the soft-tissue lining of the joint.

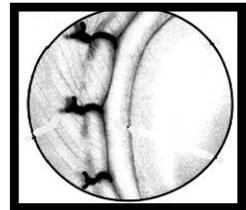
Will I need special investigations?

Yes, you may have x-rays and scans to show the damaged structures. These tests help with planning the surgery.



What happens during the surgery?

Arthroscopic surgery is done via keyhole incisions (see left picture). The soft tissue damage in the joint is replaced in its normal position, using suture anchors placed in the bone (right top). Another procedure involves transfer of bone to the front part of the joint cup. This deepens the cup. If you play contact sports and you have bone loss, this procedure (Latarjet) is the best choice (right bottom).



What is the recovery period?

The success of the surgery depends upon avoiding movements which stress the tissue repair. You need to remain in a sling for 6 weeks. During this time it is important to do the exercises prescribed. These prevent stiffness without stressing the repair. The time in the sling is reduced to 3 weeks for the Latarjet procedure.



When will I be able to return to work and drive?

This depends on the type of work. Desk duties will be possible within 2 to 4 weeks. Heavy manual work will not be possible for about 3 months. It will take about 8 weeks before you will be safe to drive. These times are reduced by 50% with the Latarjet operation.

When will I be able to return to sport?

This depends on the type of sport. Sports which involve the arm and contact sports must be avoided for 6 months. To get back to high level competition will take 12 to 18 months. Activities such as cycling and breast-stroke swimming can be done after 12 weeks. The recovery times for the bony (Latarjet) operation are reduced by 50%; for example contact sport is allowed at 3 months.

What are the complications of Surgery?

The surgery is safe and complications are unusual. However, as with any operation, problems can occur. Some of the problems are: stiffness, infection and recurrent dislocations (see below). It is important to follow the instructions following the surgery.

What happens if I don't have an operation?

You don't need to have an operation if your shoulder is stable. If you can avoid activities that cause the joint to pop out then surgery is not needed. If your shoulder continues to pop out then structures within the joint will become more damaged. This makes surgery more difficult and further increases the chance of dislocation.

What is the success rate of the surgery?

The change of re dislocation within 10 years of keyhole surgery is about 15%, and following the Latarjet procedure about 5%.

How can I get more information?

If you are still not sure what to do or have questions about your surgery please contact me on the number below.

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