

# Early pain management after shoulder surgery

The aim of this leaflet is to provide an overview of pain relief in the early post-operative period and to answer some of the common questions. It does not aim to substitute for a thorough discussion with your surgeon.

## Anaesthetic from surgery

You may have had local anaesthetic during your surgery, either as a 'block' or as 'local infiltration'. This may mean your arm and hand are numb initially after your surgery. This will wear off from a few hours to around 24 hours later and so it is important to take regular painkillers before the pain has a chance to build up.

## Ice

After your shoulder surgery the shoulder will be swollen. In the first 24 to 48 hours applying ice may help with the pain and swelling.

Apply the ice packs for 20-30 minutes at a time every hour or two, may be helpful, but make sure that you do not place ice directly on your skin, but instead use a T-shirt or thin towel.

## Painkillers

You will be given painkillers before you leave hospital.

If you have any side effects you should stop taking the painkillers and seek advice from either your GP or if you have had a severe reaction then the Emergency Department.



## Supporting the arm

You will usually have a sling to wear after your surgery. If you feel the sling is too tight then this can be loosened and the arm supported on a pillow or cushion. It is important that you do not remove the sling entirely unless you have been advised by your physio or surgeon that you are free to do so.