

Shoulder dislocation in children: guidelines during Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions that you or your child may have about managing a shoulder dislocation.

Note to young people reading this leaflet: To make this leaflet easier to read we have addressed it to parents or carers; please excuse us for referring to you as 'your child'!

What causes a shoulder dislocation?

A shoulder dislocation happens when too much force or pressure is applied to the ligaments connecting the arm to the shoulder, causing the ball to 'pop out' of the socket.

What is the treatment?

It is likely that the team will need to move the shoulder back into the correct position when you attend the Emergency Department (A&E) / Minor Injuries Unit. Once the shoulder is back in place, your child's arm may be placed into a sling for comfort.

Your child should keep the sling on for 2-3 weeks.

The team will call you 6 weeks after the injury to check on your child's progress.

When it is time to remove the sling:

- Allow your child to gently and slowly move the arm.
- Once the sling comes off, the arm should be pain-free although it may be slightly stiff from being in a sling, and your child may be a little unsure to start with.
- Encourage them to gently use the arm.
- Avoid all sports or dangerous activities (such as trampolines) until we call you.

Things to be aware of early on in the treatment

Your child may have slight pain in their shoulder. This will settle within a few days. It may be helpful to ease your child's discomfort with simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. These should be used as directed on the packet or by your pharmacist.

Seek immediate medical advice if:

- Your child is complaining of worsening pain, not controlled by simple painkillers or is unable to fully straighten their fingers because of pain.
- The fingers become very swollen, and/or an abnormal colour, or your child says they feel tingling in their fingers or increasing pain when moving them.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this condition, please contact the Orthopaedic Clinic between 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday on 0118 322 8334 (except bank holidays).

More information about the Trust can be found on our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Nev Davies, Paediatric Orthopaedic Department, March 2020

Review due: March 2022