



HEALTH INFORMATION

Frozen Shoulder

What is a Frozen Shoulder

Frozen shoulder is a painful condition that affects movement of the shoulder. If you have frozen shoulder, the amount of movement in your shoulder joint will be reduced. In severe cases, you may not be able to move your shoulder at all. The most common symptoms are pain and stiffness in the shoulder.

What causes Frozen Shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is caused when the flexible tissue that surrounds the shoulder joint, known as the capsule, becomes inflamed and thickened. It is not fully understood why this happens, although there are a number of things that make developing a frozen shoulder more likely. These include having: a shoulder injury or shoulder surgery, diabetes, Dupuytren's contracture - a condition where small lumps of thickened tissue form in the hands and fingers, other health conditions, such as heart disease and stroke.

Symptoms of Frozen Shoulder

Pain and persistent stiffness in the shoulder joint are the two main symptoms of a frozen shoulder. This makes it painful and difficult to carry out the full range of normal shoulder movements. You may find it difficult to perform everyday tasks such as: bathing, dressing, driving and sleeping comfortably.

Symptoms may vary from mild, with little interference to daily activities, to severe, where it may not be possible to move your shoulder at all.

Treating Frozen Shoulder

Treatment for a frozen shoulder will vary depending on the stage of the condition and severity of your pain and stiffness. A frozen shoulder may get better naturally, but recovery

is often slow and may take at least 18-24 months. The aim of treatment is to keep your shoulder joint as pain free and mobile as possible while your shoulder heals. The first stage of a frozen shoulder is the most painful stage. Therefore, treatment is mainly focused on relieving the pain.

During this stage, your GP may recommend that you avoid movements that make the pain worse, such as stretching overhead. However, you should not stop moving altogether. If you are in pain, you may be prescribed painkillers, such as paracetamol, or a combination of paracetamol and codeine.

If you have severe frozen shoulder, painkillers may not be enough to control the pain. If this is the case, it may be possible to have a corticosteroid injection in your shoulder joint. They help reduce pain and inflammation.

After the initial, painful stage, stiffness is the main symptom of a frozen shoulder. At this time, your GP may suggest you start shoulder exercises, and you may be referred to a physiotherapist. It is uncommon to need surgery for frozen shoulder but it may be recommended if your symptoms are severe, causing significant problems and other treatments

For more information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/Frozen-shoulder