

Healthier Communities,  
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Reverse shoulder replacement operation

## Information for patients

This booklet contains information about the shoulder surgery that you have been advised to have, and aims to answer some of the questions you may have about the operation and your stay in hospital.

# About shoulder surgery at Sherwood Forest Hospitals

At our King's Mill Hospital site, there is an elective orthopaedic ward and an elective day case unit (DCU). At our Newark site, there is an elective day case unit/ward (Minster ward). The ward and site of your shoulder or elbow surgery will be discussed with you by your consultant team in the outpatient clinic before your operation.

You will be admitted to one of these wards during your stay in hospital. On each ward a "named nurse" will be allocated to you to co-ordinate your nursing care. You will also have named physiotherapists to supervise your rehabilitation.

You will usually be admitted to the hospital on the day of your operation, and you will usually go home one to two days afterwards. If you think you will need transport to get home or help when you get home, please tell your named nurse when you first come in.

## What to bring

You need to bring in with you any medicines that you are taking, toiletries, a towel, nightwear and some loose and comfortable clothing. Please leave valuables at home.

## Operation day

Your anaesthetist will see you on the morning of the operation to discuss your anaesthetic with you. You will be able to eat and drink as usual the day before your operation. You may be able to have an early morning drink even on the day of your operation but you need to discuss this with the ward team before you have any drink.

**You must not smoke after midnight the day before the operation.**

## What is a reverse shoulder replacement?

It is a shoulder joint replacement that is used when your shoulder no longer moves properly or causes pain. This procedure is designed for people who have not done very well with all other means of treatment.

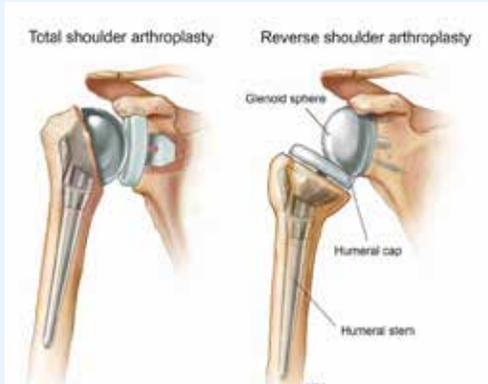
# What happens exactly?

In a healthy shoulder, your upper arm bone (humerus) ends in a ball shape. This fits into a socket formed by your shoulder blade (scapula).

Together this ball and socket form your shoulder joint. With the reverse shoulder replacement, the anatomy or structure of your healthy shoulder is reversed (your ball and socket are swapped over). This can improve the pain and function of your shoulder.



Front view of the right shoulder



Right reverse total shoulder replacement

# Why am I having a reverse shoulder replacement?

The reverse shoulder replacement is mainly used for older patients with rotator cuff tears (the muscles around your shoulder joint that support the joint). Your rotator cuff muscles may have torn or weakened to a point where they can no longer support your shoulder joint, or allow you to fully use your arm.

In many cases, the cause of your weakness may be arthritis. It could also be secondary to a previous shoulder injury; such as a shoulder fracture, rotator cuff tear or unsuccessful shoulder surgery.

# What will the reverse shoulder replacement do?

A shoulder replacement is an operation to relieve your pain. It should take away most, if not all, of the pain that you have in your shoulder. It may take several weeks before you feel the full benefit of your new shoulder, so please do not be disappointed if it is still painful after the operation.

It is unlikely that you will have as much movement as a normal shoulder after having a reverse shoulder replacement. The physiotherapists will help you to try and get as much movement as possible from your new joint.

# How is the operation done?

A reverse shoulder replacement is done as an 'open' operation, which will leave a scar about 7-10cms in length along the front of your shoulder, along the bra/vest strap line ("A" below) or along the top of your shoulder ("B" below).



# How will I look after my operation?

Your shoulder wounds will have dressings on them. Your shoulder may look a little different following the operation. This is normal, and is simply because of the new anatomy of your reverse shoulder replacement.

## Will I have to wear a splint or sling?

You will have your arm supported in a sling straight after your operation. This is to keep your shoulder still until we have done x-rays to check how your operation has gone.



## What will happen after my operation?

You will have x-rays taken the day after your surgery. Your surgeons will check these to make sure that it is safe to take off your sling. When we can take your sling off, you will be shown how to do the exercises in this booklet by one of the physiotherapy team.

## When will the stitches come out?

Your stitches will be removed on the ward or at your GP surgery, usually 10 days after your operation.

## How do I fit my sling?

**Please scan the QR code beside each instruction/exercise to view a video demonstration.**

Your sling supports your arm whilst you recover from your shoulder operation. You will be shown how to manage your sling by the physiotherapists or nurses before you go home.



1. Support your arm on a pillow before you start. Slide your sling underneath the arm, so that your elbow is tucked into the corner of the sling, as shown.



2. Now using the non-operated arm feed the strap around your back and over the non-operated shoulder, as shown.



3. Now pull the strap up on itself and fix the velcro at a level where the arm feels comfortable and supported, as shown.

You will be taught how to manage your sling by the physiotherapists or nurses. You will also be taught exercises to keep your shoulder, elbow and hand moving.

## How can I sleep comfortably?

You **must not** lie on your operated shoulder. We recommend that you lie on your back or the opposite side, as you prefer. Ordinary pillows can be used to give you comfort and support (feather pillows are easier to use than foam ones).



If sleeping on your side, having a pillow or two under your head usually gives enough support for most people. A pillow tucked along your back helps to prevent you rolling onto your shoulder in the night. A pillow in front of your tummy is a nice place to rest your hand to help you sleep.



If sleeping on your back, use a pillow under the elbow of your operated arm as shown. Again, important in helping you get a good night's rest.

## Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is important to get the most out of your shoulder after the operation. The first stage is to get your shoulder moving again, with the following exercises.

Please be guided by your level of discomfort, we do not expect you to get full range of movement on the first day – you can do too much.

# Exercises

Please scan the QR code beside each instruction/exercise to view a video demonstration.

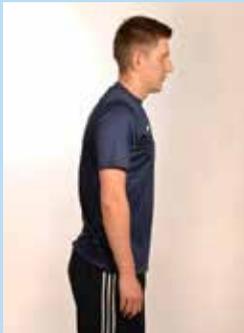
Try to do five to ten repetitions of each exercise.

You should do your exercises in this order at least twice a day at home, until your follow-up physiotherapy appointment. They can then be altered or increased under the guidance of your physiotherapist.



Leaning forwards from your hips, circle your arms from your shoulder in gentle, pendulum type movements.

Keep your palms facing forwards as you go clockwise and anticlockwise.



Shrug your shoulders up and backwards in a smooth, circular motion.



Lie on your back with your elbows on folded towels so that they are level with your shoulders. Bend your elbows to at least 90 degrees, and use a stick to turn your operated arm out to the side. Keep your elbows tucked in.





From lying on your back with your elbows supported as before, use your non-operated arm to lift the other up towards your head.



Try to get your hands on top of your head if you can.



Sitting down, slowly raise your operated arm using the pulley as comfort allows.

Remember to keep your shoulder down, elbow tucked in and your palm towards you.



Relaxing the shoulder as you use the pulley helps ease any discomfort but can be difficult to get the hang of, so be patient and don't push through pain.

## When can I go home?

- When you have recovered from your anaesthetic
- When your pain is controlled
- When you have learnt your exercises
- When you are safe to return home.

## Is that the end of my treatment?

You will usually have an appointment at a local physiotherapy department within two weeks of leaving the ward.

You will also go to the follow-up clinic at King's Mill or Newark Hospital. This is run by the advanced practice physiotherapist and/or nurse specialist. They will see you six weeks after your operation. They can arrange a quick appointment with your surgeon if necessary.

Around six months, you will have another clinic check-up. This will also be with the advanced practice physiotherapist and/or nurse specialist, who will also organise a quick appointment with your surgeon if needed.

If you are at all worried about your shoulder you should contact the shoulder and elbow team. The telephone numbers are given at the end of this booklet.

## What will I do as an outpatient?

You will continue with your exercises with the help of a physiotherapist. You will be given more exercises if you need them. You will gradually work on developing the strength in your shoulder, progressing to full functional movement. We will encourage you to learn how to use your shoulder comfortably.

If you have a heavy or demanding job, you may also be helped by our occupational therapists.

## When can I do my normal activities?

This depends upon your symptoms, and how long you have to wear the sling for. Most people are comfortable by between six to 12 weeks after surgery.

Driving can be resumed when you are comfortable and safe to control a car. It is wise to discuss this with your insurance company.

The following table gives you the timescales for the amount of rest required to your arm before resuming a particular type of activity.

### Guide:

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| • Light work (no lifting)                     | 10 days – 6 weeks     |
| • Medium (light lifting below shoulder level) | 6 weeks onwards       |
| • Heavy (above shoulder level)                | Discuss with the team |

If you feel that your work or leisure activities come into the 'heavy' category, please discuss this with the physiotherapists and occupational therapists so that we can plan the best rehabilitation for you. This type of activity following a reverse total shoulder replacement may not be recommended to you and needs discussion before surgery.

If you are at all worried about your shoulder you should contact the hospital's shoulder and elbow team. The telephone numbers are below.

## Useful contact numbers

**King's Mill Hospital**

**Telephone: 01623 622515**

**Newark Hospital**

**Telephone: 01636 681681**

### **Extension number**

Mr Kurian's secretary	4117 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
Mr Bidwai's secretary	6148 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
Mr Mitra's secretary	6318 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
Nurse surgical care practitioner	4104 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
Advance practice physiotherapist	6148 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
King's Mill Day Case Unit	3048 (Monday to Friday, 24 hours)
King's Mill orthopaedic ward	2343 (Monday to Sunday, 24 hours)
Newark Hospital Day Case Unit (Minster ward)	5850 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
King's Mill physiotherapy department	3221 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)
Newark Hospital physiotherapy department	5885 (Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm)

## **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office

Leaflet code: PIL202204-04-RSRO

Created: April 2019 / Revised: April 2022 / Review Date: April 2024