



**Nottingham
Orthopaedics**

NHS

**Nottingham
University Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Acromioclavicular Joint Dislocation

Information for patients

Fracture Clinic



This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

Fracture Clinic
QMC
Derby Road, Nottingham
Tel: 0115 924 9924 ext 61260

Your diagnosis

You have an injury called an **acromioclavicular joint dislocation**. This is an injury to the ligaments which stabilise your collar bone. It is usually very painful and bruising often develops over the shoulder initially.

Treatment

Your injury is at the less severe end of the spectrum and does not require surgery. You can safely move your shoulder without causing any damage. It is important you start moving your shoulder as soon as possible, as it will initially be very stiff and early movement will speed up your recovery. It usually takes six weeks for the injury to heal and you should avoid heavy lifting and contact sports in this time.

Recovery

It will take a long time to recover from your injury. By three months you should have reasonably normal day to day function but you may still not have your full range of movement.

Movements can improve for up to a year following this injury. Your range of movement may not completely recover, but your day to day function should ultimately return to normal. You should take simple over the counter painkillers to improve your pain, to allow you to move the shoulder. Speak to your GP or pharmacist if you need advice on what painkillers to take.

Can I work or drive?

You may be able to drive provided you feel you are safe to operate the vehicle. You should contact your insurance company to check they have no stipulations before driving.

Depending on your job you may be able to work, though heavy work will not be possible for at least six weeks. Your GP can provide a medical certificate if necessary.

What can't I do?

You should avoid heavy lifting until 6-8 weeks after your dislocation and the pain has subsided.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is important to get the most out of your shoulder after your injury. It is important to gently begin moving your shoulder straight away. Please be guided by your level of discomfort; we do not expect you to get a full range of movement on the first day—you can make your pain worse if you do too much!

We recommend you keep your arm below shoulder height for the first couple of weeks after your injury to allow things to settle.

Exercises

Exercises should be started as soon as possible. It may be beneficial to take pain relief 30-60 minutes before attempting these exercises. We suggest you do these exercises ten times each and three times a day.

Stage 1 (From injury to 6 weeks)

1. Regularly move your elbow, wrist and hand so they do not become stiff whilst you are using your arm less than normal.
2. Using your unaffected arm raise your injured arm until your elbow reaches shoulder height.



3. Lie on your back with your elbows supported as shown, hold onto a stick / pole / rolling pin and rotate your arm outwards.



Stage 2 (After 6 weeks)

1. You can now progress and start raising your arm fully over head using the same technique as before.



2. Take your hand behind your back. Hold onto your wrist using your unaffected hand and pull your hand up your back.



Sleeping

You should not lie on your affected shoulder if it is uncomfortable. We would 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, one pillow slightly folded under your neck gives enough support for most people.



A pillow tucked along your back helps to prevent you rolling onto your operated shoulder in the night.

If sleeping on your back, tie a pillow tightly in the middle (a 'butterfly pillow') to use under your neck. A slightly folded pillow under your neck will also give you enough support.



Exercise videos

If you have access to the internet through your smartphone or computer you can access our online advice videos for exercises. Scan the QR codes below or use the link provided.

Stage 1 Exercises	Stage 2 Exercises
www.youtube.com/ playlist? list=PLcNFUixa- 4ZjiLPkxHfu09lvq55oxFV-C	www.youtube.com/ playlist? list=PLcNFUixa- 4ZhrTXQukey_wBLG1t-6RY
	

Key points

1. If you feel you are failing to make satisfactory progress with your shoulder range of movement by four weeks please contact the fracture clinic.
2. Take regular pain relief if required. Usually over the counter medications are sufficient but if you have any concerns see your GP or Pharmacist to advise you what to take and how often.
3. Remember your shoulder may take a long time for the movements to return. If you have significant restriction three months after your injury, despite performing exercises, please contact fracture clinic for an appointment.

Contact us

Physiotherapy

You will have an open appointment in the physiotherapy department. If you feel you are not making appropriate progress with your **movements** or **pain** then please get in contact for a face to face appointment:

If you need to get in touch please call **0115 849 3312** between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Fracture Clinic

If there is another problem with your progress following your injury you can book in for a face to face appointment with the fracture clinic to see a doctor:

If you need to get in touch please call **0115 924 9924 ext: 61260** between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.



Notes

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204

From abroad: +44 115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301

Deaf and hard of hearing: text 07812 270003

E-mail: pals@nuh.nhs.uk

Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614, Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk



You can also scan the QR code to leave patient, family or carer feedback. After scanning the QR code please go to 'How can I leave my feedback' and select the service that you have accessed and then follow the on screen prompts.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patientinformation@nuh.nhs.uk or phone 0115 924 9924 ext. 67184.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.