

Shoulder dislocations in children

Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your child has sustained a shoulder dislocation. It explains what a shoulder dislocation is and how it is treated. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is a shoulder dislocation?

A shoulder dislocation is when the upper arm bone (humerus) comes out of the socket in the shoulder. The bone can come out all the way or some of the way and may go back in on its own.

What causes this type of injury?

A shoulder dislocation happens when extreme force is put on a joint. It can occur if your child falls or takes a hit to their body, such as while playing a contact sport.

How is this type of injury treated?

Collar and cuff sling

We will put your child's shoulder back into place in hospital. We will then give your child a collar and cuff sling to comfortably support their arm. Your child should wear this sling for two to four weeks to let their injury recover.

Pain relief medication

Your child may experience some mild discomfort after their injury, but their shoulder should not feel painful or unstable after being put back into place. Pain relief medications, such as paracetamol (Calpol®) and ibuprofen, can help to ease their discomfort. Always check the label before giving your child any over-the-counter medications.

Are there any complications?

After a shoulder dislocation, there's an increased risk it could happen again. We advise that your child takes it easy and follows our advice for the first 12 weeks after the injury while their shoulder recovers.

There is also a risk of 'recurrent shoulder dislocation'. This is when the shoulder joint repeatedly comes out of place, often after a traumatic first dislocation, especially in children. If this keeps happening, we may need to perform some further tests, including an MRI scan (a scan that takes detailed pictures of the inside of the body), to find out why.

When can my child resume their normal daily activities?

Your child can gradually resume their normal daily activities, such as going to school, as soon as they feel comfortable to.

Your child should **not** participate in any:

- **non-contact sports** for eight weeks (for example, swimming)
- **contact sports** or **overhead activities** for four months after their injury, such as:
 - basketball
 - cricket
 - football
 - hockey
 - horse riding
 - ice skating
 - rugby
 - skiing

Will my child need any follow-up care?

We will refer your child for physiotherapy and your child should receive an appointment within a few weeks of their injury. A physiotherapist will recommend some shoulder exercises to help your child regain full movement and strength in their shoulder. They will also advise your child on when they can resume sporting activities.

We will also arrange to see your child in our clinic within two to four weeks of their injury so we can see how their injury is healing.

When should I seek medical help?

Contact us if your child:

- has severe pain.
- struggles with their physiotherapy exercises.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Children's outpatient department

Telephone: **023 8120 4477** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm)

Email: paedorthopaedics@uhs.nhs.uk

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/dislocated-shoulder

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/patient-information-leaflets

www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk

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