

There is no gold standard way to manage Frozen (Contracted) shoulder; unfortunately no treatment option is likely to guarantee a full recovery.

### What is it?

A frozen (contracted) shoulder is a condition when the capsule around the shoulder gets inflamed and tight. This prevents shoulder movement and causes pain.

Most frozen (contracted) shoulders are self-limiting conditions, which usually resolves on its own in time and can take up to 36 months.

### How do we treat it?

Generally you will be offered one or more of the treatment options mentioned depending on your symptoms, pathology and preference.

This leaflet and your health professional can tell you the options available for you to choose from and at any point you can discuss further options, to make a decision that is right for you.

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# Frozen (Contracted) Shoulder

## Decision Aid

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Watch and Wait

## Physiotherapy treatment

## Medication

## Injection

## Consultant opinion

What does this entail?

This entails waiting for the condition to improve on its own. You can continue with functional activities as your pain allows and these should get easier with time, indicating an improvement in pain and range of movement.

Stretches, mobilisations, advice/adaptation of activities, acupuncture, heat/cold therapy, TENS.

Paracetamol with or without codeine, or oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory as prescribed.

Injecting local anaesthetic and corticosteroid close to the shoulder joint. In some cases you may need more than one injection.

A consultant can provide an opinion on further options available (may include an operation/repeat injection) but is usually only considered if other treatments have failed.

Will this reduce my symptoms and allow me to do my activities?

Usually yes- With time symptoms like pain and stiffness should improve.

There is some evidence that physiotherapy will help reduce pain and regain mobility.

Regular use of medication should help reduce pain and allow a more active lifestyle/exercise.

Corticosteroid which is anti-inflammatory should help the pain & allow a more active lifestyle/ exercise.

This should but you will be expected to exercise afterwards.

Are there any risks to this treatment?

As such no; but pain and lack of range make activities of daily living difficult.

Symptoms may be aggravated initially, but discuss with your clinician if needed.

Yes, all medication can have side effects. Some of them are- indigestion/constipation. Your GP/pharmacist can discuss this with you.

Injections also carry some rare risks such as allergic reactions and joint infections; your clinician will discuss these prior to injection.

Risks will be discussed with you by your consultant. Some of the risks are infection and failure to get benefit from surgery.

How long will it take for me to feel better?

Generally functional improvement occurs in 18-36 months from onset of symptoms. Sometimes much earlier, rarely longer.

No evidence to suggest it speeds up recovery (18-36 months) however it may help you to manage your symptoms.

You may feel pain relief but the effects last as long as you take the medications.

This varies; you may get short or long term pain relief after an injection. However, you may still have a restricted range of movement and hence it is important to exercise while in less pain.

This will vary depending on type of management. No treatment option is likely to guarantee a quick & full recovery.

### References-

1. Buchbinder R, et al. 2003, Corticosteroid injection for shoulder pain; Cochrane database systemic review. 2. Lorbach O, et al. 2010 March, Journal of shoulder and elbow surgery. 3. Vastamakhi H, et al. 2012 April, Clinical orthopaedics and related research. 4. Burbank, K.M et al. 2008 Chronic shoulder pain part -2, treatment; American family physician. 5. Green et al. 2003, Cochrane review of physiotherapy interventions for shoulder pain. 6. "Frozen shoulder" in www.patient.co.uk. 7. Shoulder pain in NICE CKS (clinical knowledge summary). 8. South Bristol Commissioning Support 2014. 9. Arthritis Research UK booklet- Shoulder pain 2012 www.arthritisresearchuk.org.

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