Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Care of the Shoulder following a Stroke

Version number: **7**
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Care of the Shoulder Following a Stroke

Patient Information

Community Stroke Services

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Why take care of your shoulder following a stroke?

The shoulder relies on its surrounding muscles to keep it in a good position.

Following a stroke, you may lose feeling in your arm, which increases the risk of injury. The muscles may not work as they should do. Therefore it is important to take care of your shoulder.

What can be done to address these problems?

A therapist may assess you on the ward or at home. They may suggest ways of positioning your arm.

If it is appropriate the therapists will work with your arm to try and improve the way your arm functions. If they think it will help you, they may also provide a support for your shoulder.

If you have pain in your shoulder, you should let your doctor or therapist know as soon as possible as there may be medication available to help.

What can you do?

It is important that you think about the position of your arm is especially if you cannot feel it. When your friends and family visit it may be helpful for them to remind you about positioning your arm.

Be careful when you, or your family, are moving your arm and putting on clothes. Support the arm as much as possible. When getting dressed, put your weaker arm into your clothes first. When getting undressed, remove your weaker arm from your clothes last. This may make getting dressed and undressed easier and will help to protect your shoulder from injury.

Contact information

If you or your family are unsure about any of these points or have any problems or queries, please ask the team for advice.

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary

Tel: 01942 822100

Leigh Infirmary

Tel: 01942 264160

Wrightington Hospital

Tel: 01257 256305

General guidelines

Do

- Try to be aware of where your arm is at all times.
- Ensure your arm is positioned as advised.
- Dress affected arm first and undress it last.
- Ensure your arm is fully supported when moving.
- Regularly feel for your arm and hand to make you more aware of where it is.
- Try to have your palm and outstretched fingers supported when resting.

Don’t

- Forget about your arm if you cannot feel it.
- Allow your arm to hang by the side of your chair.
- Hold your arm tight in against your body with your other arm.
- Allow your relatives to pull on your arm if they are helping you to move it.
- Ignore any pain or discomfort in your shoulder.
- Squeeze a ball (this is unlikely to help).



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