

Shoulder Subluxation

This leaflet offers information about shoulder subluxation and how to manage it. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member responsible for your care.

What is shoulder subluxation?

Shoulder subluxation is a very common problem post-stroke. It happens when the muscles that usually hold the arm bone into the shoulder socket have weakened. It can cause the arm to slip down or forwards slightly.

What can I do about it?

Unfortunately, there aren't any exercises to improve shoulder subluxation but here are some ways you can manage it:

Positioning

The arm should be supported by a pillow or armrest where possible, see picture below. Slings can be used when standing or walking but only for short periods of time, otherwise your arm may become stiff. Please speak to your physiotherapist for a sling assessment.



The affected elbow should be away from the body, palm down and fingers uncurled.

Sit up straight in your chair or wheelchair with a pillow under your affected arm.

Pain Relief

Sometimes shoulder subluxations can become painful. Taking regular pain relief is very important so that you can keep your arm moving and continue with your rehabilitation. Speak to your doctor about which medication may be appropriate for you.

Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES)

Some people find that using an electrical stimulation device on their shoulder is helpful. Your therapist will discuss whether this is something that might help you.

Useful sources of information

[Pain after stroke | Stroke Association](#)

[Shoulder subluxation and pain | National Clinical Guideline for Stroke](#)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your shoulder, please contact the ward therapy team on 020 8725 6544 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

