# Shoulder sling for elbow surgery

Information for patients

**This Information leaflet gives you information about how to use a sling following your elbow surgery. Please note that this is for guidance only. Please contact your health professional for assistance should you have any questions or queries.**

The type of surgery that you have undergone will dictate the length of time that you are required to support your arm in a sling. For some surgical procedures they are used for comfort only and to assist with managing your pain, whereas with others, resting in a sling for a set period is essential. The sling is designed to hold and protect your elbow whilst it is healing.

Wearing the sling can often feel unnatural, uncomfortable and hot. It is, however, a useful way to manage pain.

## Standard Sling

Once your sling is in position it should look like this:







## How to apply:

In sitting support your arm on a pillow:



Slide your forearm into the sling ensuring the elbow is tucked into the corner of the sling.



Take the shoulder strap across your back and over your unaffected side.



Place the strap through the metal loop and fold back on itself, attaching the Velcro.

### Please note:

- **The elbow should be tucked into the corner of your sling**
- **The wrist should be in line or slightly higher than the elbow**
- **The arm should feel that the sling is supporting it well.**

## How can I shower?

You should avoid having a bath until the wounds are well healed. You may, however, have a shower as long as the force of the shower spray does not go directly onto the wounds. At first you may feel more comfortable having a wash rather than a shower, until your pain settles and you gain some confidence.

You can remove your sling for showering.

## How do I get dressed?

Getting dressed can seem difficult and complicated at first. The sling should be used to help manage your pain. It is often advisable to choose garments that open at the front with a zip or buttons as it is easier to feed your affected hand in first, followed by the unaffected arm. To do this sit with your forearm and hand on a pillow and carefully thread your sleeve onto your arm.



## Can I wear my sling at night?

If, for pain relief, you prefer to use your sling at night, this position may be most comfortable for you.

If you have any concerns regarding the information included in this leaflet, please contact your Physiotherapist or other healthcare professional for advice.