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## **Adhesive Capsulitis (Frozen Shoulder)**

### **Description:**

Frozen shoulder is a very painful shoulder condition that can occur either spontaneously or after a minimal trauma or injury. The shoulder becomes irritable and mounts an exaggerated response to a minor injury by making inflammation and pain out of proportion to the injury. It can start with an ache, which gradually becomes more severe until it reaches a point where pain killers are ineffective and sleep disturbance is common.

Unfortunately, this is a difficult condition to treat. It usually follows a predictable course that takes 18 to 24 months to reach resolution. It will be painful for 6-8 months (freezing), very stiff, but not painful, for 6-8 months (frozen) and finally it will begin to resolve and the movements return (thaw) over a 6-8 month period.

Some surgeons offer injections during the painful phase, some offer surgical release (arthroscopic) if the symptoms fail to progress. There is little good quality evidence that any treatment offers any advantage over the natural course, although it may speed up the natural progression.

Each patient is assessed and treated on an individual basis.

I do offer injections and surgery in appropriate cases, but tend to avoid any surgical intervention when the shoulder is very painful as it tends to provide short term benefit only and quickly tightens again as the irritable joint is further aggravated by the surgical insult.

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