

# Patient information

## Tennis Elbow Release

You will be admitted for surgery to your elbow because of a so-called tennis elbow problem. This is a condition where the muscles used for straightening the wrist and fingers are irritated at their point of origin near the elbow. This condition is rarely associated with racket sports but may be brought on by a number of activities of daily living. Normally non-operative treatment should be pursued for between 6-12 months before surgery is carried out. Non-operative treatment consists of physiotherapy, the use of an elbow brace, possibly steroid injections or acupuncture. If no or only temporary improvement, surgery should be considered.

### Surgical Treatment

Surgery is usually performed by local anaesthetic. A tourniquet may be applied to the arm to shut down the blood supply during the operation. A small incision is made over the outer aspect of the elbow and the wrist muscles are released from their bony attachment. Often some scar tissue is found and this is removed at surgery. The membrane covering the muscles is repaired and the wound is either closed with a suture or sometimes with surgical tape.

Following surgery a soft bandage be applied and the arm should be rested in a sling.

### Post Operative Regime

You should rest the arm in a sling until the post-operative pain has settled. Within 2 weeks un-resisted exercises of the elbow and wrist should be commenced. The sutures, if any are normally removed around this time. You will be instructed with regard to exercises by your physiotherapist.

At four to six weeks strengthening exercises can be started It is not advisable to return to repetitive activities stressing the operated muscles until approximately three months following surgery.

As soon as the wound is dry you may have a bath or shower. Return to driving is an individual decision but you should not drive until you are confident to do so.

## **Return to work**

This will depend on your situation and commitments. You should discuss this with your surgeon.

## **Complications**

**Pain:** A certain amount of pain is expected following surgery. You should take the painkillers as prescribed by your surgeon. You may also place a bag of ice cubes or frozen peas over the elbow to ease discomfort. If further pain is experienced please contact your General Practitioner or the surgical department.

**Wound leakage:** A certain amount of bleeding may be seen following surgery for the first 2-3 days. Gentle pressure applied to the dressing will normally result in stopping the bleeding but if this should not be the case please contact your General Practitioner or the surgical department.

**Infection:** Infections following elbow surgery are rare. If you should experience swelling, redness, throbbing pain or leakage of pus and/or high temperature in association with elbow pain you should contact your General Practitioner or the surgical department.

**Recurrence:** It is rare that recurrences are seen following tennis elbow surgery. In general improvement is expected to continue for up to twelve months following surgery. During this period of time you may however on certain activities experience a temporary recurrence of your symptoms. It is important that you continue doing the exercises in which you may have been instructed by your physiotherapists.

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