



SHOULDER PROBLEMS (PAIN, INSTABILITY, STIFFNESS)

This brochure tells you about Shoulder Problems (Pain, Instability, and Stiffness) and how it is diagnosed, including what Imaging tests you may need to have.

What is Shoulder Pain or Instability?

Shoulder instability means that the shoulder joint is loose and able to slide around in the socket. Sometimes your shoulder can slip out of the socket completely. This means it is dislocated.

Shoulder pain is a very common complaint. If you have shoulder pain, you may have it all of the time or it may only happen when you move your shoulder.

Shoulder pain or instability is usually caused by problems with the soft tissues, muscles, ligaments, and tendons around the shoulder.

Diagnosis

Your doctor will discuss the signs and symptoms of your shoulder pain or instability. Shoulder pain will usually go away within a few days and you would not normally need an x-ray for diagnosis. Sometimes however, if:

- your doctor thinks something more serious may be causing your shoulder pain
- your shoulder is unstable
- your pain does not get better with simple treatment measures

he/she may request an x-ray. This will help the doctor to decide what is causing your shoulder pain or instability and what type of treatment you need.

Depending on what the x-ray shows, your doctor may request further tests which may include an Ultrasound, MRI or CT scan.

Further Information

For more detailed information, please see [Inside Radiology](#), a resource produced especially for consumers by the [Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists](#).

If you would like to look at other relevant brochures, please see

- [Ultrasound](#)
- [Plain x-ray](#)
- [CT Scan](#)
- [MRI Scan](#)
- [Radiation risks of x-rays and scans](#)

Or log into the Diagnostic Imaging Pathways website -
www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/includes/consumer.html

or

If you have questions or require any further information please contact your doctor or speak to the staff where you are going to have your procedure.

Consumer Participation

This information has been reviewed by representatives from the following groups:

- Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
- The Health Consumers' Council.

Feedback

The Division of Imaging Services, Royal Perth Hospital is committed to providing a friendly and professional service. If you would like to provide feedback on this information sheet, please send to:

Quality Coordinator
Imaging Services
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GPO Box X2213
Perth WA 6000

Website

For more information go to www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au

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