

Subacromial Decompression Surgery Key Points

What is subacromial depression?

Subacromial impingement is a common condition affecting the shoulder. Most people get better with rest, exercise, pain relief and injections. If these do not work, surgery may help.

What does the surgery do?

The surgeon makes more space in your shoulder. This can help reduce pain and improve movement.

How this is done

- A small part of bone is smoothed.
- A soft, swollen tissue (fluid-filled cushion) may be removed.
- Sometimes, a small part of the collar bone is also removed.

What to Expect

Before Surgery

- You will meet the surgical team to check if surgery is right for you.
- You may have health checks before the operation.
- You can ask questions at any time.

On the day

- Do not eat or drink for 6 hours before surgery.
- You will have a general anaesthetic (you will be asleep).
- It is usually a day case (you go home the same day).

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How well does it work?

- About 3 out of 4 people are happy after surgery.
- Many people get back to normal activities in about 12 weeks.
- Recovery depends on:
 - How long you had symptoms
 - How bad the pain was
 - Your general health

Risks (Possible Problems)

This is usually a safe operation, but risks include:

- Slow healing or pain that does not fully go away (rare)
- Infection (wound getting sore, red, or swollen)
- Very small risk of injury to tendons (tissues that connect muscle to bone)
- Reaction to anaesthetic (tell your doctor if this has happened before)

After Surgery

Going home

- You will usually go home the same day.

Sling

- You may get a sling.
- It is for comfort only. Use it if needed, but try to move your arm gently.

Exercises

You see a physiotherapist who will show you exercises to do. These help you move your shoulder again.

- Do your exercises every day.
- They may feel uncomfortable at first, this is normal.
- Keep going to help recovery.

Looking After Your Wound

You may have 2–3 small wounds. Keep them clean and dry (up to 2 weeks). You may need stitches removed.

- **Get help if you notice:**
 - Redness, heat, or swelling
 - Feeling unwell or having a temperature

Recovery Guide

Everyone is different, but a rough guide to expect:

- Driving: about 1 week
- Light work: about 2 weeks
- Full movement and heavy work: about 6 weeks
- Full strength and sport/exercise: about 12 weeks
- Pain may take up to 6 months to fully settle

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