

**Clinical Guideline:** Frozen Shoulder Site: FPH

Common in people between 40- 65  years of age. More common in women and may follow an earlier injury, period of immobility or surgery. Higher incidence for people with diabetes and other endocrine disorders. Often afflicts contra-lateral shoulder but does not recur.

Three phases:

Freezing phase gradual onset of constant pain and sharp exacerbations with sudden movement, 3-6 months

Frozen phase increasing stiffness and restricted function, 3-6 months

Defrosting or recovery phase slow resolution and restoration of activity, 6-12 months

History

General Information

Majority of patients manage well with confirmation and explanation of diagnosis and reassurance that condition will eventually resolve with simple symptom control measures.

Treatment targeted at symptom control (pain). No treatment proven to reliably shorten course of condition.

Regular Paracetamol and NSAIDs as tolerated.

Activity modification (avoid provoking activities, while preserving existing function)

Consider gleno-humeral intra-articular steroid injection if no improvement at six weeks (or symptoms severe).

Physiotherapy:

Manual Therapy, Heat / Cold Packs, TENS and Acupuncture often give relief.

Early (Freezing Phase) stretching exercises often aggravate symptoms.

Later (Recovery Phase) referral to restore motion, strength and function can be beneficial

Advice and Treatment

Referral Guidelines – red flag signs

No routine Ix. Consider shoulder X-ray to exclude fracture (history of trauma) or osteoarthritis (gleno-humeral or AC joint). Typically normal in capsulitis.

Investigation

Confirm diagnosis and any associated pathology (e.g. Diabetes).

History of insidious onset and examination finding of restricted rotation of shoulder usually diagnostic.

Gauge symptom severity and impact on quality of life, particularly sleep and self-care.

Impingement symptoms may be present secondary to tight capsule.

Weakness with preserved passive rotation rather implies rotator cuff pathology.

Examination

[**http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Frozen-shoulder/Pages/Introduction.aspx**](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Frozen-shoulder/Pages/Introduction.aspx)