

## **ROTATOR CUFF – PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

### **WHO GETS ROTATOR CUFF PROBLEMS?**

- People who work or do sports/hobbies with their hands above shoulder height
- Rotator cuff problems can develop as we get older
- A shoulder injury or repetitive or unaccustomed activity may also cause the condition to develop

### **WHY DO WE GET ROTATOR CUFF PROBLEMS?**

The rotator cuff is a group of muscles which help to control the movement of the ball and socket joint. If this control is inadequate then the muscles can become stressed or squashed between two bones, which can cause them to become painful.

### **WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MUSCLES?**

In the majority of cases, the muscle becomes painful without any serious damage and responds well to self-management. However, in some instances, the tissues can become inflamed, show signs of degeneration or develop a tear.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

Shoulder or upper arm pain particularly when lifting the arm, lying on it or using the sore muscles.

### **HOW CAN I DEAL WITH IT?**

- Relative rest from the provocative activity
- Pain relief as advised by your pharmacist or GP
- Gentle exercises to prevent your shoulder from stiffening up and to rehabilitate your muscles

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS DOESN'T HELP OR IF THE SYMPTOMS ARE SEVERE?**

- Physiotherapy to plan an individual rehabilitation programme in order to improve your day-to-day function by correcting your posture and increase or maintain your movement and strength
- You may require investigations e.g. x-rays, ultra sound etc
- You may benefit from an injection
- You may require a surgical procedure if your symptoms are severe or fail to settle with self management, pain management and physiotherapy

### **HOW CAN I AVOID GETTING ROTATOR CUFF PAIN OR PREVENT A REOCCURRENCE OF A PREVIOUS ROTATOR CUFF PROBLEM?**

- Avoid excessive unaccustomed activity with the hands above shoulder height e.g. tackle tasks like painting the ceiling, hanging curtains and trimming the hedge in short periods of time
- If you exercise, ensure you balance your training programme to incorporate strength work for all muscle groups
- Take breaks from repetitive shoulder movements and heavy lifting