

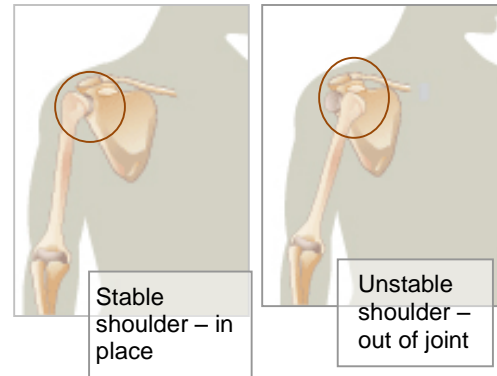
## Shoulder Instability

### What is shoulder instability?

Shoulder instability means the shoulder slips in and out of joint more than it should. It also could be that it slips part way out of joint and then goes back in on its own.

Shoulder instability may be caused by:

- Recent dislocation of the shoulder.
- History of a traumatic dislocation that caused instability over time.
- Being born with it. This is called congenital. Patients who were born with loose joints have a higher risk of dislocation.
- Shoulder weakness.



### What are the symptoms?

- Pain with increased movement of the shoulder.
- Popping and clicking.
- Shoulder feels loose. This is called decreased stability.

### How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will review your activities. It is diagnosed by the location of the pain, symptoms and a physical exam.

### How is it treated?

Pain medicine, decreased activity, rest and icing may help with pain and swelling. Other treatments may include:

- Icing. Use a bag of crushed ice, or frozen peas or corn. You can reuse these items as an ice pack. **Do not eat** the corn or peas once they have been used as an ice pack.
  - Put a towel between skin and bag. If you put the ice pack directly on the skin, it may cause frost bite. Put the bag on the sore area.
  - Leave on for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Shoulder strengthening exercises may start with the help of a physical therapist. Therapy will work on slow and controlled movements to strengthen the muscles. Stronger muscles help protect the shoulder.
- Exercises will also need to be done at home. Regular therapy helps you learn an exercise routine. This will help you return to normal activities.

**ALERT:** Call your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if you have special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.