

Orthopaedics

Wrist Arthroscopy (Key Hole Surgery)

What is a wrist arthroscopy?

A wrist arthroscopy is a form of keyhole surgery where a surgeon uses a small camera (arthroscope) to look inside and examine the wrist.

Why is it done?

If your surgeon thinks you have a problem inside your wrist joint, they may wish to look inside. This allows them to see most of the small bones of the wrist as well as the ligaments and allows them to look for damage or inflammation.

Arthroscopy can be used to both diagnose and treat the wrist problem.

Diagnosis may include ligament injuries, arthritis and cartilage damage/tears.

There are an increasing number of treatments that can be performed using an arthroscope including trimming or repairing torn cartilage, removing loose bodies, removing inflamed lining of the joint and removing arthritic bone overgrowth.

Surgery

Before you come into hospital for your surgery please make sure that you have removed all jewellery, especially rings on the arm/hand that is to be operated on. Also please take off any nail varnish, gel or false nails

The surgery is a day case procedure usually under either a regional (just the arm numb) or a general anaesthetic (asleep). It usually takes about 30 minutes, but if other procedures are needed it may be much longer.



Patient Information

Approximately three to six small 3mm incisions are made on the back of the wrist to allow the camera and instruments inside. Care is taken not to injure the tendons and nerves just under the skin. After the arthroscopy the skin is closed (stitches or sticky stitches) and a bulky dressing is applied.

You will need someone to drive you home.

What are the risks?

There is a small chance of the following problems:

- Swelling
- Infection (Less than 1%)
- Stiffness
- Numbness
- Tendon or nerve injury (uncommon)

How long will I be off work?

You can expect to return to work within two weeks of surgery depending upon the nature of your job and if simple treatments were performed. Jobs involving heavy work or more complex procedures may require you to remain off work for up to six weeks.

When can I drive?

You are advised not to drive for the first two weeks following the operation. You should be able to grip the steering wheel without pain or distraction, look over your shoulder and perform an emergency stop. You are advised to inform your insurance provider in advance of returning to driving.

Further information

The day surgery unit can be contacted on 02476 966861 / 02476 966868 (University Hospital), or on 01788 663264 (Hospital of St. Cross). For further information please visit our hand service's web site at www.UHCWhand.org or contact:

Patient Information

- Our plaster room technicians at Hospital of St Cross on 01788 669143
- Our plaster room technicians at University Hospital Coventry on 02476 96909
- Hand Therapy at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire on 02476 966016
- Hand Therapy at Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby on 01788 663257
- Our specialist hand surgery nurse / hand-coordinator on 02476 965072

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact us on 02476 966861 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

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