

“Shoulder scans show problems that are common in people without pain. Before having a scan, ask your doctor what the alternatives are for you.”

Professor Rachelle Buchbinder,
Rheumatologist

Still unsure?

When you talk to a doctor, ask:

1. Do I really need a scan?
2. What are the risks?
3. What happens if I don't have a scan?



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Scan
your
options

— not
your
shoulder

**SHOULDER SCANS CAN
CAUSE HARM**

F 12 MHz G 61%
D 3 cm XV 1
PRC 10-5-L PRS 5
PST 4

What are my options?

Not everyone needs a scan

This is important to know, because having a shoulder scan (e.g., ultrasound or MRI) can cause harm (see next page). This leaflet contains information about when you might need a shoulder scan, and when you should try other options first.

Things to look out for

You may need a scan if you have

- a recent injury or fall + cannot lift your arm
- cancer or suspected cancer
- had a recent infection, use recreational drugs, or take medicines that reduce your immune system

Common shoulder pain

The following symptoms, on their own, **do not** generally require a shoulder scan

- pain
- pain and/or difficulty moving arm

Why you should scan your options, not your shoulder

On average, for every 100 people in their 50s who have a shoulder scan:



This means that **1 in 2** people who have a shoulder scan will get a false alarm. The remainder may be no worse off, but they will experience no long-term benefit.

The most common cause of shoulder pain is 'rotator cuff disease.' Less commonly shoulder pain is caused by 'frozen shoulder,' which may require specific treatment. Both of these conditions can be diagnosed without the need for a scan.

* A false alarm is a scan result that seems serious (e.g. 'rotator cuff tear') but is common in healthy people without shoulder pain. Many people get a false alarm on their scan results. This can lead to unnecessary surgery and other treatments that don't help.

Get back to better

Shoulder pain improves on its own

Expert doctors recommend trying some of the options below to manage your pain in the short term. If you don't have any of the 'things to look out for' (page 1), you don't have to make a decision about having a scan right now.



Gentle movement



Find comfortable sleeping positions



Use pharmacy medication (if needed)



Give yourself time. Many recover in 4-12 weeks



Speak to your doctor if things are not improving