

# SUSSEX SHOULDER & ELBOW

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## Olecranon Spurs

### What is an Olecranon Spur?

The olecranon is the most proximal part of the ulna, which is one of the two bones in the forearm. An olecranon spur is an extra bony prominence on the point of the elbow, which is present in some people. These spurs result from an enthesiopathy (bony ossification) of the triceps tendon where it inserts onto the olecranon. Most people are not even aware they have an olecranon spur, as the majority do not cause any symptoms. On occasion the spur might crack, as it is weaker than normal bone and result in pain. This can be bothersome when bending and straightening the elbow and when leaning on the point of the elbow. If this is the case you may require treatment to alleviate the symptoms.

### What are the treatment options for an Olecranon Spur?

If there are symptoms associated with the spur we would recommend simple measures initially. These include painkillers and modifying activities that bring on the pain. A cortisone injection might be considered but this can lead to problems with the triceps tendon. In the uncommon situation where there is persistent pain associated with a fracture of the spur, surgical removal of the spur is an option. This is done through a small incision over the point of the elbow. Surgery is done as a day case and you may require a splint on the arm for 2 weeks after which you can return to full function in a graduated manner.

### How are Olecranon Spurs Diagnosed

Most commonly they are an incidental finding when an X ray of the elbow is taken as they do not usually cause any problems. You should not be worried if a spur is seen on an X ray. If you have pain over the point of the elbow with an associated spur it may be worth seeing an expert to discuss whether any treatment is necessary. Your surgeon may request a CT scan of the elbow however, usually an X ray is enough to evaluate the problem.

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#### NHS Patients

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[iwantgreatcare.org](http://iwantgreatcare.org)

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These notes are intended as a guide and some of the details may vary depending on your individual circumstance and at the discretion of your surgeon.

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