



Driving: with Upper Limb Conditions or After Surgery

General Advice

There is **no fixed rule or timeframe** for when it is safe to drive with an upper limb condition or after surgery. The key consideration is whether you can **safely control a vehicle**.

You are responsible for deciding when you are ready to drive.

Driving With a Splint, Cast, or Sling

Driving while wearing a **splint, cast, or sling is generally not recommended**.

These supports often:

- Limit grip and steering control
- Restrict movement needed for sudden manoeuvres
- Slow reaction time
- Make it difficult to perform an emergency stop safely

You Should NOT Drive If

- You are wearing a splint, cast, or sling
- You have pain, weakness, numbness, or poor coordination in the affected arm
- You are taking medications that affect alertness or reaction time
- You cannot confidently perform an emergency stop

Before Returning to Driving

You should be able to:

- Comfortably grip and control the steering wheel
- Use the affected arm without hesitation
- React quickly in unexpected situations
- Drive without relying on unsafe compensatory movements

It is sensible to start with short, familiar drives.

Important to Know

Surgeons do **not formally assess or certify driving ability**, and there is **no standard medical test** that determines fitness to drive after upper limb surgery.

For this reason, decisions about returning to driving are based on your ability to safely control the vehicle.

Key Points to Remember

- Recovery and readiness to drive vary between individuals
- Driving with an immobilised upper limb is usually unsafe
- When in doubt, it is safest **not to drive**

If you have questions about your recovery or functional use of your arm, your surgical team can provide general guidance.