

What is Barbotage?

Barbotage is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat **calcific tendinitis** of the shoulder. This condition occurs when calcium deposits build up in the tendons of the shoulder, causing pain, inflammation, and reduced shoulder mobility.

Barbotage involves using a needle and ultrasound guidance to break up and remove the calcium deposits, reducing pain and improving shoulder function.

Why is Barbotage Done?

You may be referred for barbotage if:

- You have persistent shoulder pain due to calcific tendinitis.
- Conservative treatments like physical therapy, rest, medications, or corticosteroid injections have not helped.
- Imaging shows large or painful calcium deposits.

What Happens During the Procedure?

1. **Preparation:**
 - You will lie on your back or side or sit on the examination bed.
 - The skin is cleaned and numbed with local anaesthetic. Your shoulder will be covered with a sterile drape.
2. **Ultrasound Guidance:**
 - An ultrasound probe is used to locate the calcium deposit and guide the needle in the right place.
3. **Needling (Barbotage):**
 - A fine needle is inserted into the deposit.
 - The calcium is broken up and flushed out using a saline solution (sometimes aspirated).
 - A corticosteroid may be injected around the tendon to reduce inflammation.
4. **Duration:**
 - The procedure typically takes 20–40 minutes.

After the Procedure

- You may experience some discomfort or soreness for 1–2 days.
- Apply ice packs as needed.
- Avoid strenuous activity with your shoulder for 3–5 days.
- Physiotherapy may be recommended for optimal recovery.

Benefits

- Minimally invasive
- Reduces pain and inflammation
- Improves shoulder mobility
- Avoids need for surgery in many cases

Risks & Side Effects

Barbotage is generally safe, but possible risks include:

- Temporary pain or swelling
- Bruising at the injection site
- Infection (rare)
- Incomplete removal of calcium (may require repeat procedure)

Other potential side effects will be discussed with your doctor before the procedure.

When to Seek Medical Help

Call your doctor if you experience:

- Severe or increasing pain
- Fever or chills
- Redness or swelling at the site
- Signs of infection