

Orthopaedic Connection

Shoulder Pain

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

What Is It?

A sore shoulder can result from playing with grandchildren. How about tennis or hanging wallpaper? You wake up the next day and can hardly move your arm. Your shoulder is telling you to give it a rest. It is easy to ignore a little mild aching and keep your pace, but working through pain can lead to more serious problems, especially as you get older. Some people ignore mild symptoms for months before seeing me.

- Impingement Syndrome is a condition often caused by over use. Impingement refers to excessive rubbing or squeezing of tissues in the shoulder joint. These tissues are the rotator cuff tendons, muscles and bursa surrounding the ball and socket of the shoulder joint.

Impingement comes from a variety of conditions including a bony spur, bursitis and tendinitis.

Never mind all the words. Too confusing. Think impingement = tissue in front of the shoulder getting squeezed or pinched.

- Bursitis is an inflammation of the lubricating sac (bursa) located on top of the rotator cuff.
- Tendinitis is an inflammation or irritation of the shoulder tendons. Many of the shoulder tendons (4) are part of the rotator cuff.
- Arthritis. True shoulder arthritis is in the ball and socket joint. The joint space thins, spurs appear, stiffness sets in and lots of pain. I say true arthritis because my patients call anything around the shoulder that hurts arthritis. In reality true arthritis is relatively rare compared to the other causes of shoulder pain which are much more common.
- Torn Rotator Cuff. The 4 tendons of the rotator cuff can be partly torn or in some cases completely torn. Partial tearing can often be treated non-operatively, but a full tear of the cuff tendons usually requires surgery to repair it.

Treatment

Call the office for help if pain is acute, or if it persists after trying to treat it yourself with no relief.

I am not going into how all of this is diagnosed in this discussion. Obviously I have to use my diagnostic skills to figure out what is causing the pain. Effective treatment can only happen if the diagnosis is correct.

- Rest it for a few days is a good place to start.
- Heat (10 – 15 minutes) then ice (10 – 15 minutes) can help
- Advil or similar as an anti-inflammatory
- Physical therapy
- Corticosteroid injection sometimes
- Surgery is a last resort. Either arthroscopic or open may be needed.

Final Thoughts

- Non surgical treatment can take 4 – 6 weeks to achieve desired results.

- *Key Point* – Don't try to work through shoulder pain! If you feel discomfort, give the shoulder a rest.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush