

"Doc, My Shoulder Hurts"

This is one of the most common things we hear in the office. Shoulder problems seem to affect just about everybody at some time.

The pain and disability can be annoying or severe and may even keep the person awake at night.

What it probably isn't, is true arthritis. While we do see honest to goodness wearing out of the ball and socket (true arthritis) on occasion it is much less common than the other shoulder conditions causing pain.

Did you know the shoulder has much more motion than any other joint making it easy to injure? The injuries to the shoulder don't usually lead to arthritis however, as they so often do in the knee.

So why does the shoulder hurt?

Muscle strain from over use or work activities is the most common problem. This can subside in a few days with rest and simple treatment at home, i.e. heat, ice, Advil or Aleve etc.

Inflammation known medically as tendinitis and bursitis can set in. This can be caused by over use too, but often subtle wear and tear changes in the shoulder tissues can be the origin. Often patients tell us they have no idea what they did to cause the shoulder pain. At first it is hard to tell from strain, but it typically is harder to get rid of and patients usually end up in our office. Stronger anti-inflammatory medication, physical therapy and possibly an injection are on the menu of treatment.

Impingement is a condition that doctors often refer to that occurs in the front of the shoulder caused by friction. The rotator cuff tendons rub against the bony part of the shoulder blade that covers them. It really is a progression of wear and tear changes.

Treatment for impingement almost always runs through the doctor's office and is properly evaluated by exam and x-rays. Treatment may include medication, injections, physical therapy and even surgery at times.

Wow, we have hardly scratched the surface. Come back next time for more about your shoulder.

Shoulder problems or any other Orthopaedic Surgery condition can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at Lakeview Community Wellness Center. Clinic dates are March 7, March 21, 2008. Call 989-463-6092 for an appointment.