

Shoulder Pain

Shoulder Pain?... It could be a Rotator Cuff Injury!

What causes it and how do I treat it?

A rotator cuff injury is linked to pain in the shoulder. It can be very painful and reduce your range of motion. The symptoms of this injury include a pain which sometimes can be described as a dull ache deep in the shoulder. It can lead to disturbed sleep, particularly if you lie on the affected shoulder and it can make everyday tasks like brushing your hair or reaching behind your back difficult and uncomfortable. You may also experience some arm weakness.

Your rotator cuff is a group of four muscles on your shoulder blade with tendons that attach to the "ball" of your humerus (upper arm bone). These muscles and tendons help you to lift and rotate your arms. They also help hold the ball of your humerus firmly in your shoulder socket.

Rotator cuff injuries can be the result of either a substantial injury to the shoulder or to progressive degeneration or wear and tear of the tendon tissue. Repetitive overhead activity, heavy lifting over a prolonged period of time, and the development of bone spurs in the bones around the shoulder may irritate or damage the tendon.

The following factors may increase your risk of having a rotator cuff injury:

Age. As you get older, your risk of a rotator cuff injury increases. Rotator cuff tears are most common in people older than 40.

Certain sports. Athletes who regularly use repetitive arm motions, such as cricket bowlers, archers and tennis players, have a greater risk of having a rotator cuff injury.

Construction jobs. Occupations such as carpentry or house painting require repetitive arm motions, often overhead, that can damage the rotator cuff over time.

Family history. There may be a genetic component involved with rotator cuff injuries as they appear to occur more commonly in certain families.

Treatment

There are two types of treatments for your rotator cuff injury or tear. The most common is a non-surgical treatment which includes physical therapy, sports massage and osteopathy. These treatments are often used first, before considering surgery. „

Surgical treatment comes with specific risks. Your doctor or health care provider may advise you to have one or both of these types of treatments for a rotator cuff tear. This advice will depend on the type and size of your injury. The amount of damage to the tendon of your rotator cuff will help your doctors decide what treatments you may need and how long treatment may take.

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