

Contending with rotator cuff tendinitis

Shoulder surgery is not always the answer

Rotator cuff tendinitis—the inflammation of key tendons in the shoulder—is the most-common cause of shoulder pain and it can usually be treated without surgery.

The earliest symptom is a dull ache around the outside tip of the shoulder that gets worse when you push, pull, reach overhead, or lift your arm up to the side.¹

Lying on the affected shoulder also hurts, as do common activities like getting dressed, lifting anything, or raising your arms over your head for any reason. Eventually, the pain may become more severe and extend over the entire shoulder.

“The best way to avoid tendinosis or tendinitis in the shoulder is to make sure your shoulder is flexible in all planes and that all of the muscles around the shoulder are strong and flexible,” **according to John Richmond, MD, one of the medical professionals who provide expert second opinions for our clients.**

Other indicators can include:²

- Swelling and tenderness in the front of your shoulder
- “Clicking” in your shoulder when you raise your arms over your head
- Loss of strength or range of motion

If you’re having symptoms of rotator cuff tendinitis, your doctor will examine your shoulder to see where you’re feeling pain and tenderness. Your provider will also test your range of motion by asking you to move your arm in certain directions.

Depending on the severity of the pain, your doctor may require an X-ray or other imaging technique to get a better look at your shoulder and determine whether it is inflamed or torn. Rotator cuff tears are typically very painful, and sometimes require corrective surgery.

If there is a small or partial rotator cuff tear that is treated without surgery, the symptoms will quiet down over a six-week period, according to Dr. Richmond.

If you have symptoms of tendinitis, seeing your primary care physician is the first step in learning exactly what is going on. And—as with most medical issues—your Best Doctors benefit is a valuable tool in determining the exact source of your symptoms.

¹https://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/what_to_do_about_rotator_cuff_tendinitis
²<https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/rotator-cuff-tendinopathy#1>

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