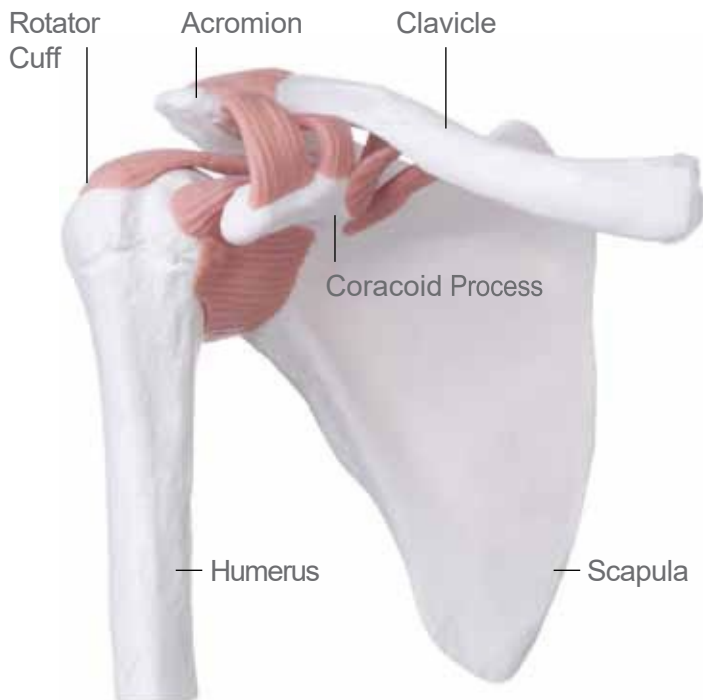
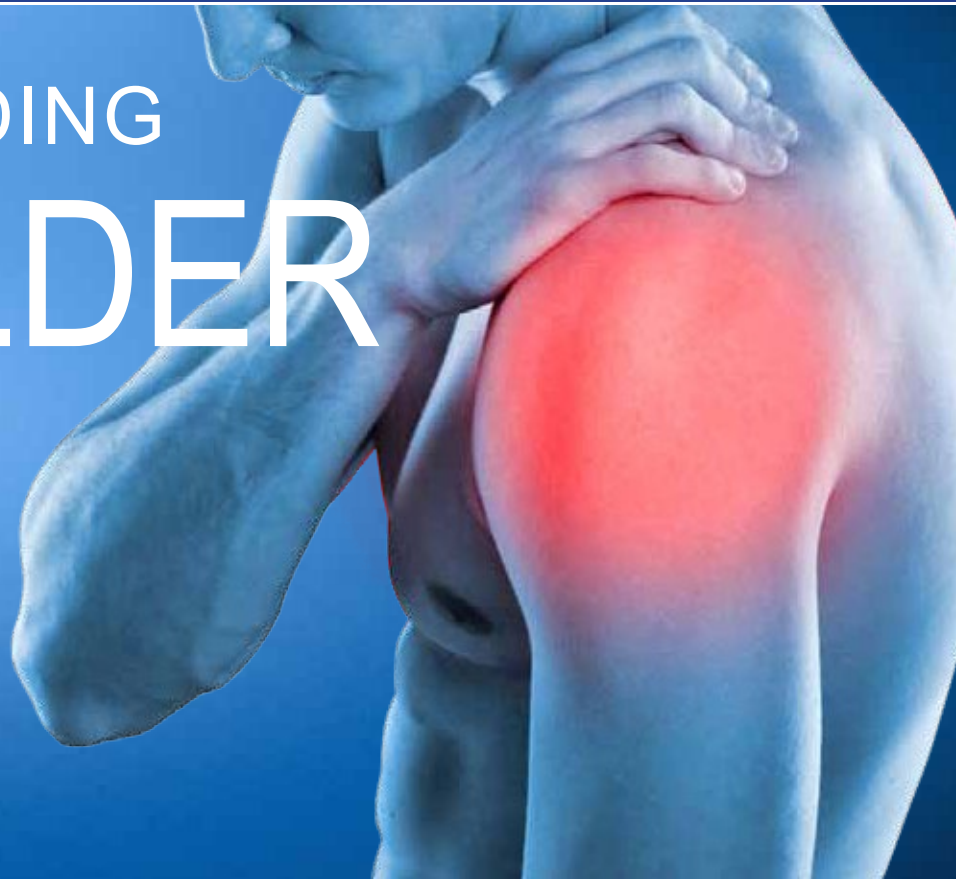


UNDERSTANDING SHOULDER PAIN



COMMON CAUSES

Shoulder injuries are frequently caused by athletic activities that involve excessive, repetitive, overhead motion, such as swimming, tennis, pitching and weightlifting. Injuries can also occur during everyday activities such as hanging curtains or gardening. People may underestimate the extent of their injury because the pain, weakness, or limitation of joint motion will become second nature to them. If you are experiencing stiffness, difficulty rotating your arm in normal positions or lacking strength to carry out your daily activities you should consult an orthopedic surgeon for help in determining the severity of the problem.

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MEMORIAL HERMANN SURGICAL HOSPITAL - FIRST COLONY

COMMON SHOULDER INJURIES

Most problems in the shoulder involve the muscles, ligaments, and tendons, rather than the bones. In athletes, shoulder problems can develop slowly through repetitive training routines. Some people will have a tendency to ignore the pain and “play through” a shoulder injury, which only aggravates the condition, and may cause more problems.

Orthopedic surgeons group shoulder problems into the following categories.

■ Instability

Sometimes, one of the shoulder joints moves or is forced out of its normal position. This condition is called instability, and can result in a dislocation of one of the joints in the shoulder. Individuals suffering from an instability problem will experience pain when raising their arm. They may feel as if their shoulder is slipping out of place.

■ Impingement

Impingement is caused by excessive rubbing of the shoulder muscles against the top part of the shoulder blade, called the acromion.

Impingement problems can occur during activities that require excessive overhead arm motion. Medical care should be sought immediately for inflammation in the shoulder because it could eventually lead to a more serious injury.

ROTATOR CUFF INJURIES

The rotator cuff is one of the most important components of the shoulder. It is comprised of a group of muscles and tendons that hold the bones of the shoulder joint together. The rotator cuff muscles provide individuals with the ability to lift their arm and reach overhead. When the rotator cuff is injured, people sometimes do not recover the full shoulder function needed to properly participate in an athletic activity.

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT

Often, an orthopedic surgeon will prescribe non-surgical solutions to relieve shoulder pain.

■ Medication

A wide range of medications are used to treat shoulder pain. Some are available over the counter. Others require a doctor’s prescription.

■ Physical Therapy

Many causes of shoulder pain can be helped by applying ice, stretching and using different physical therapy techniques. The goal is to get you back to the point where you can perform normal, everyday activities without difficulty. Preserving good range of motion is key to maintaining the ability to perform daily activities. Physical therapists provide exercises designed to preserve the strength and use of your joints.

■ Injections

Injections offer quick, effective pain relief. However, they can be used only a few times a year because they weaken bone and cartilage.

SURGICAL TREATMENTS

■ Shoulder Arthroscopy

A procedure that orthopedic surgeons use to inspect, diagnose, and repair problems inside a joint. Shoulder arthroscopy may relieve painful symptoms of many problems that damage the rotator cuff tendons, labrum, articular cartilage, and other soft tissues surrounding the joint.

■ Open Repair

During an open repair, the surgeon makes the incision over the shoulder and detaches the shoulder muscle (deltoid) to better see and gain access to the torn tendon. An open repair may be a good option if the tear is large or complex or if additional reconstruction, such as a tendon transfer, is indicated.