

# Rotator Cuff Syndrome

A Painful Shoulder Condition

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## Condition Sheet



Rotator cuff injuries are best known for sidelining baseball pitchers, but they don't just affect athletes. Many adults suffer from the same painful shoulder condition. In fact, the rotator cuff is the most common cause of shoulder pain, which you may feel when you move your shoulder in certain ways, such as washing your hair or putting on a coat. If you have shoulder pain that is severe or continuous, you should see a pain specialist. Our affiliated physicians understand that a timely diagnosis and treatment are of great importance. We can provide non-surgical measures that will enable you to return to everyday activities without pain.

### What is the rotator cuff?

There are four muscles and tendons in the shoulder. As a group, they are referred to as the rotator cuff, which can become painful from many conditions, including:

- trauma from a fall or dislocation,
- trauma from repetitive movement,
- structural abnormalities in the shoulder, and
- wear and tear on the tendons as people age.

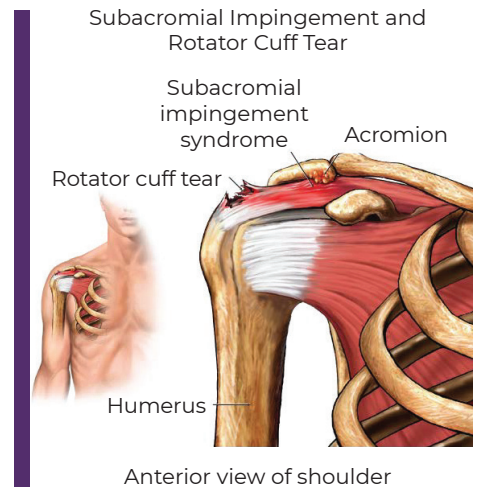
Any of these conditions can cause the muscles or tendons of the rotator cuff to be strained, bruised or torn.

The most common symptom of rotator cuff syndrome is pain in the shoulder when the arm is

raised above the head. It may radiate toward the elbow. (Pain that radiates past the elbow to the hand is usually not related to a shoulder issue.) The shoulder pain is typically worse when you attempt activities such as reaching behind your back or sleeping on the affected side. Tenderness, weakness and reduced range of motion may occur.

### The need for an accurate diagnosis

In addition to rotator cuff disorders, several other conditions can result in shoulder pain, including frozen shoulder, shoulder instability, and shoulder arthritis, to name a few. Treatment measures can vary depending on the cause of the shoulder condition. Therefore,



identifying the correct source of your shoulder pain is essential. At our network of pain management centers, we will conduct a thorough review of your history and a complete physical exam. Special imaging studies may be ordered to ensure the proper diagnosis is reached.

### The importance of treatment

It's vital to seek care for persistent shoulder pain to prevent a permanent loss of motion. Fortunately, a large percentage of rotator cuff disorders can be treated effectively through non-surgical means. Such measures can include activity modification,

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exercise, medications and physical therapy. If pain is ongoing or is interfering with the ability to do physical therapy, an injection of a local anesthetic and anti-inflammatory corticosteroid may help relieve the pain so

that physical therapy can be resumed. Platelet rich plasma and stem cell injections may also be considered as regenerative treatments.

At our affiliated centers, the appropriate combination of these

treatments will be individualized for you in a pain management plan with the goal of maximizing your functionality in the most time-efficient manner.

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