



Injury Law Center®

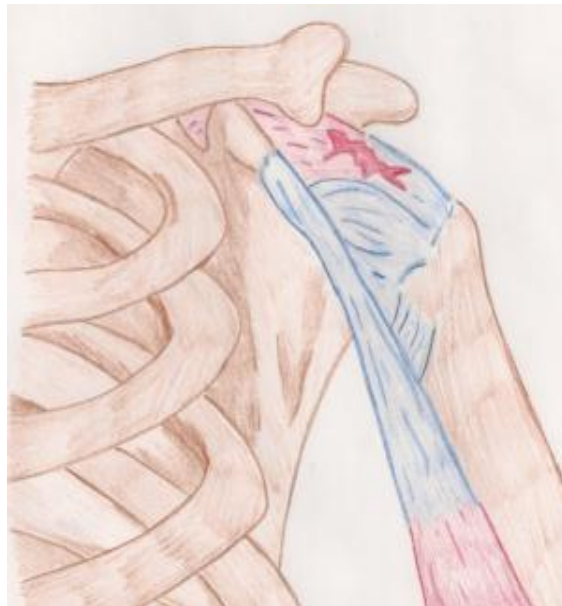
Note: This information is provided to give you a basic understanding of the injury. It is not intended as medical advice. You should consult a qualified medical provider.

SHOULDER INJURIES

Description

The most common injuries to the shoulder are:

- Rotator Cuff
- Labral Tear
- Bursitis
- Frozen shoulder (Adhesive Capsulitis)
- Brachial Plexus Injury (Nerve Damage)



Rotator Cuff Injuries

A rotator cuff injury is a tear or inflammation of the rotator cuff tendons of the shoulder. The tendons of four muscles make up the rotator cuff. The tendons attach the muscles to four shoulder bones. Rotator cuff injury may be caused by a falling on an outstretched arm or on the elbow. Either of these falls may produce enough force to drive the humerus (upper arm bone) into the shoulder socket. Often times a motor vehicle crash can cause rotator cuff injury when the hand is gripping the steering wheel and the force is transmitted up the humerus forcing the humerus into the shoulder socket.

Symptoms

The primary symptoms of a rotator cuff injury is pain and weakness in the shoulder, especially with movement. A partial tear causes pain but still allows for movement. A complete tear usually prevents the injured person from raising the arm away from the side.

Diagnoses

A diagnosis is made after a physical examination and often times a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the shoulder.

Medical Help

The initial treatment is usually rest and ice packs as well as anti-inflammatory medication. As soon as the pain decreases, physical therapy is usually started. Sometimes, if the pain persists for several weeks, the physician may inject cortisone into the shoulder. Usually these cortisone injections are limited to three in number.

Seriously torn rotator cuff tendons usually require surgical repair. This is usually done arthroscopically, that is with an instrument placed in the shoulder to view the shoulder joint and confirm the presence of a tear and to remove any bony spurs that may be present in the shoulder area. The torn rotator cuff is reattached to the humerus with stitches.



Labral Tear

When a force is transmitted up the arm into the shoulder or directly onto the shoulder itself, the labrum, that is the cartilage that the bone of the upper arm glides on when the arm moves, can become damaged and torn.

Symptoms

The main symptom of a labral tear is pain in the shoulder when the arm is moved.

Bursitis

Bursitis is the inflammation of the bursa. Bursae are closed sacs, containing a membrane resembling the synovial membrane that line joint cavities, and are located within muscles and

tendons. Bursa facilitate the movement of muscles and tendons over the bones by reducing friction.

Symptoms

Symptoms of bursitis are pain, swelling, tenderness, limitation of motion of the joint, and on the surface above the effective bursa.

Medical Help

Treatment for bursitis usually consists of rest, modification of work or other activities, application of heat or cold, ultrasound, sometimes aspiration of excess fluid from the bursar and anti-inflammatories as well as corticosteroid injections.

Frozen Shoulder

Frozen shoulder, or adhesive capsulitis, can often occur after a minor injury to the shoulder or after a period of inactivity of the shoulder for any reason. The condition is essentially a consequence of any disorder which directly affects the ability to move the shoulder or which causes pain whereby the patient refrains from moving the shoulder.

Symptoms

In addition to an inability to move the shoulder, the hand may be swollen and abnormally cold as a result of reflex stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system.

Medical Help

The goal of medical treatment is to regain the shoulder's normal range of motion. Rest and heat along with physical therapy is typically prescribed. When there is no response to these therapies, the patient will be placed under anesthesia and a manipulation of the shoulder will be attempted followed by range of motion exercises.

Brachial Plexus Injury

Description

Branches in the lower four cervical (neck region) nerves unite with fibers of the first thoracic nerve to form the brachial plexus in the neck and shoulder. This bundle passes through the shoulder and divides into branches and provides sensory and motor nerves to the entire arm and hand.

Over two thirds of all injuries to the brachial plexus are caused by trauma. Traumatic injury can result from a laceration or from a stretching or bruising or compression of the plexus.

Medical Help

In cases of brachial plexus trauma, the doctors attempt to determine the severity, location and extent of the injury. After a thorough clinical examination, an Electromyogram (EMG) and Nerve Conduction Velocity (NCV) test are performed. Once the problem is diagnosed, physical therapy is usually started to prevent muscle atrophy.

Symptoms and Outcome

Patients with mild traction injuries usually recover within several months and do not experience any weakening of the muscle. Surgical intervention is not usually necessary. However, pain is

often the dominant symptoms may persist even after full muscle strength is recovered.

A severe stretching or crushing of the plexus will likely produce permanent paralysis of some or part of the shoulder or arm. Surgery may be necessary to decompress the plexus. **Practical advice**-If surgery is indicated, it must be done early to be effective, therefore, do not delay the surgery if your surgeon indicates that surgery is necessary.

Key Terms

Rotator Cuff-The four muscles in the shoulder that hold the bones of the shoulder in place.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)- A diagnostic technique that provides high-quality cross-sectional images of organs within the body without x-rays or radiation. **Practical Advice**-if at all possible try to have an MRI that has the highest resolution that is the highest Tesla. Most MRIs have 1.5 Tesla, however many are now 3.0

Tesla. Open MRI is often very low resolution, with many being .3 Tesla

HELP

If you have suffered a shoulder injury, or any other type of injury, you should seek appropriate medical help and if your injury was caused by another's negligence or fault, you should seek appropriate legal help bring a claim for compensation.

Feel free to call or e-mail The Injury Law Center® for answers to your questions and help with your legal claim.

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