

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

"Doc, My Shoulder Hurts"

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This is one of the most common things I hear in the office from my patients. Shoulder problems seem to affect nearly everybody at some time. I can say that I am in this group also so I am sympathetic, believe me.

The pain and disability can be annoying but tolerable or severe and present all the time even at night.

What it probably isn't, is true arthritis. While I do see true arthritis occasionally in our patients it is much less common than the other shoulder conditions causing pain. True arthritis is a wearing out of the ball and socket just like in the hip.

The shoulder has much more motion than any other joint making it easy to injure.

So if it isn't true arthritis causing the pain why does the shoulder hurt?

Muscle Strain

This comes from over use or work activities. It is the most common cause of shoulder pain. This can subside in a few days with rest and simple home treatment like heat, ice, Advil, Tylenol, etc.

Inflammation

This is known medically as bursitis and tendinitis. It can be caused by over use too, but often subtle wear and tear changes in the shoulder tissues can be the cause.

Often shoulder patients tell me they have no idea what they did to cause the pain. It is harder to get rid of than a strain and patients usually end up in my office. Stronger anti-inflammatory medication, physical therapy and possibly an injection are on the menu of treatment.

Impingement

This is a condition that happens in the front of the shoulder caused by tendons rubbing against the bone part of the shoulder that sits above the tendons. It is worse than simple bursitis/tendinitis and harder to treat. I need to properly evaluate it by exam and x-rays. Treatment can be physical therapy, medication, injections and sometimes surgery.

We have lots more to cover about the shoulder. Please come back next week to learn more.

For much more information about the shoulder and things I treat in the office log onto my office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com /Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush