



Don't Let Shoulder Injuries Sideline You

By Michael Magoline, MD

Every year millions of people visit their physician due to shoulder injuries. One of the most important parts of your shoulder, your rotator cuff, consists of muscles and tendons that hold your shoulder in place and help you lift and rotate your arm. A rotator cuff tear is a common cause of pain and disability among adults.

Rotator cuff tears can be caused due to a sudden injury, but can also occur as a natural deterioration of the tendon tissue due to aging. Common injuries to the rotator occur from lifting a heavy object or suffering a traumatic fall, but most rotator cuff problems develop over time because of the degenerative wear and tear that comes with aging. That is why most rotator cuff injuries are commonly seen in patients over the age of 40.

Symptoms of a rotator cuff injury or tear can include recurrent pain, especially with certain activities; pain that prevents you from sleeping on your injured side; grating or cracking sounds when moving your arm; a limited ability to move your arm; and muscle weakness. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important to visit your healthcare provider for appropriate evaluation. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is often used as a helpful tool in appropriately diagnosing and managing rotator cuff injuries.

Most rotator cuff injuries respond to non-surgical, conservative treatment. Nonsurgical management of shoulder injuries includes rest, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications and an occasional cortisone injection. However, if non-surgical treatments are not satisfactory and continued pain persists, surgery may be necessary.

With modern surgical techniques, the vast majority of injuries to the shoulder and rotator cuff can be managed arthroscopically with minimally invasive techniques that greatly decrease pain, speed up recovery and can be performed on an outpatient basis.

The goal of any shoulder surgery is to provide pain relief and restore strength, function and range of motion to the shoulder joint and upper extremity when more conservative measures such as physical therapy and rest have failed. Arthroscopic shoulder surgery involves making very small incisions around the shoulder and visualizing the shoulder anatomy (including the rotator cuff) with a very sophisticated camera that allows the surgeon to repair the injured tissue with small instruments and minimal disruption to the non-injured tissue around the rest of the shoulder. This results in much less scar tissue formation, less pain, a much lower risk of infection and a faster recovery time for the patient.

Injuries to the rotator cuff are very common and should be taken seriously because of the important role this structure plays in providing stability and strength to the shoulder joint. Seeking immediate treatment for a shoulder injury aids in a correct and timely diagnosis, allowing for appropriate management of these injuries and ultimately a successful recovery. If you are experiencing continued shoulder pain, it is time to see a shoulder specialist, such as the board-certified, fellowship-trained surgeons at Crystal Clinic Orthopaedic Center, to help you get back to your active life.



Michael R. Magoline, M.D., a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, graduated from Washington and Lee University and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. He completed his surgical internship at Brook Army Medical Center, his orthopaedic residency at Summa Health System, and a fellowship in Arthroscopic Surgery and Sports Medicine at Orthopaedic Research of Virginia in Richmond, VA. During active duty in the U.S. Army, Dr. Magoline worked as a flight surgeon, experienced multiple deployments, and in 2003 served as chief of orthopaedic surgery at Bagram Hospital in Afghanistan. He received three Army commendation medals. Dr. Magoline specializes in arthroscopic surgery, shoulder and knee reconstruction, and total joint replacement. He sees patients at the Crystal Clinic's Hudson and Montrose offices.



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