

Inflammatory Conditions

Things that end in 'itis'

DEFINITION

Inflammatory or Soft-tissue rheumatic syndromes affect the tissues and structures that surround a joint and produce pain, swelling, or inflammation. Syndromes are groups of signs and symptoms that occur together and characterize a particular problem. In soft-tissue rheumatic syndromes, the structures around joints include tendons, ligaments, bursae, and muscles.

Because these structures are near the joints, pain in these areas may easily be mistaken for arthritis. However, arthritis refers to inflammation in the joint itself, not the structures around the joint. Soft tissue rheumatic syndromes affect areas around the joints of the shoulders, chest, elbows, wrists, fingers, hips, back, knees, ankles, and feet.

THREE TYPES OF SOFT-TISSUE RHEUMATIC SYNDROMES

The three most common conditions are tendinitis, bursitis, and myofascial pain.

Tendinitis (ten-din-EYE-tiss) is inflammation or irritation of the tendon, which is a thick cord that attaches muscle to bone. Tendons transmit the power generated from muscles to move a bone.

Bursitis (burr-SY-tiss) is inflammation or irritation at the bursa, a small sac located between a bone and muscle, skin, or tendon. The bursa allows smooth gliding between these structures.

Myofascial (my-oh-FAY-shal) pain is pain in areas of muscles, often in the back, neck, and shoulder. It is often associated with tender, hard areas called trigger points. When pressed, these trigger points are painful, and the pain can spread away from them.

Most of these conditions occur suddenly and may last for days or weeks and then go away. They can occur again in the same location or in other parts of the body. When properly treated, most of these conditions do not result in a damaged structure or permanent disability.

Types of Soft-Tissue Rheumatic Syndromes

SHOULDER

- Rotator cuff tendinitis (impingement syndrome): Four muscles make up the rotator cuff. These muscles move the shoulder from the side and turn it inward and outward. Rotator cuff tendinitis occurs when shoulder injury or overuse causes tendons to become pinched between structures that are involved in shoulder motion.
- Rotator cuff tear: This condition occurs as a result of a severe shoulder injury or as a complication of chronic (repeated) rotator cuff tendinitis. With this condition, a portion of one or more of the four muscles tears.
- Subacromial bursitis: This bursa lies just above the rotator cuff. Inflammation in the bursa produces symptoms very similar to rotator cuff tendinitis because of its location. Bursitis often develops due to injury, impingement (pinching), or calcium deposits.
- Bicipital tendinitis: The biceps tendon is located in the front of your shoulder. This tendon helps bend your elbow and turn your forearm. Overuse or injury typically causes inflammation in the tendon.
- Myofascial pain: Muscle pain located in the broad muscle overlying your shoulder or between your shoulder blade and spine can be severe.

ELBOW

- Lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow): The epicondyle is the region where muscles of your forearm attach to the outside bone of your elbow. Overuse of these muscles occurs in tennis and other sports that require forced extension of the wrist or hand. Gardening, using tools, or clenching your hand excessively (such as when carrying suitcases) also may cause epicondylitis. In many cases, the cause is unknown.
- Medial epicondylitis (golfer's elbow): This condition, which is less common than tennis elbow, is caused by overusing the muscles used to clench your fingers.
- Olecranon bursitis: Swelling of this small sac at the tip of your elbow is caused by injury, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, infection, or leaning on your elbows.
- Ulnar nerve entrapment: The ulnar nerve controls sensation and strength of your fourth and fifth (little) fingers. Located in the inside of your elbow in a groove, this nerve can be damaged by injury, pressure, or arthritis.

WRIST AND HAND

- Dequervain's (duh-KUR-vans) tendinitis: This is a condition involving the overuse of your thumb tendons, often caused by pinching with your thumb while moving your wrist. This can occur with writing, gardening, or fine handiwork. It commonly occurs during and after pregnancy.
- Carpal tunnel syndrome: The median nerve that passes between your wrist bones and a strong ligament on the bottom of your wrist may be compressed. This nerve supplies sensation to your first three fingers and part of the ring finger and provides strength to your thumb muscles. Causes of carpal tunnel syndrome include pregnancy, injury from repetitive use or overuse, thyroid disease, diabetes, infection, rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory arthritis. In most instances, no cause can be found.
- Ganglion: A ganglion is a thin sac filled with a jelly-like fluid, usually near a joint or tendon sheath. It typically appears over the top of your wrist but can appear in other places. The cause of a ganglion is unclear. Its size can vary with time, and pain varies. A ganglion may not be painful at all, or painful only when it is hit or struck. Most ganglia do not need treatment.
- Stenosing tenosynovitis (trigger finger): Thickening of the lining surrounding the tendons of your fingers results in trigger finger. Sometimes bumps develop on the tendon sheath. This condition usually is caused by overuse.
- Dupuytren's contracture: This condition occurs when the layer of tissue just beneath the skin on the palm side of your hand and fingers thickens and causes your fingers to "draw down" into a bent position. The cause is unknown; sometimes it runs in families. Dupuytren's contracture commonly affects mature men, but can also affect women and younger people.

FRONT OF THE CHEST

- Tietze's syndrome: This is a rare condition that involves inflammation of the cartilage joining your ribs to your breastbone. Tietze's syndrome is associated with swelling in the region. Tietze's syndrome may occur as a result of injury or ankylosing spondylitis. However, in most cases its cause is unknown.
- Costochondritis: This is a more common condition that is similar to Tietze's syndrome with two main exceptions. People with costochondritis have tenderness in the same joints as people with Tietze's syndrome, but without the swelling or inflammation. Also, the pain that people with costochondritis have often is worse on the left side of their chest wall.

HIP

- Trochanteric bursitis: This bursa is located over the prominent bone on the side of your hip. Females and middle- to older-aged people are affected more often. Injury, degeneration, and calcification of the bursa region are common causes. In addition, walking abnormally due to arthritis in your hip, knee, ankle, foot, or back can stress this region. Leg length differences and scoliosis also can lead to trochanteric bursitis. However, in many people, there is no known underlying cause.
- Ischial bursitis (weaver's bottom, tailor's seat): This bursa is located over your buttock bone, or ischium. Inflammation may occur as a result of injury or sitting on hard surfaces too long.

LOWER BACK

- Myofascial back pain: This is a dull, aching pain located in the connective tissue (fascia) or in the muscles of your lower back and buttocks. Causes include minor injury or strain to your back without an actual herniated disk or fractures. This condition may be associated with degenerative arthritis of the back.

KNEE

- Prepatellar bursitis (housemaid's knee): This bursa is located beneath the skin and in front of the kneecap. It becomes inflamed as a result of infection, injury, gout, or repeated irritation (kneeling).
- Infrapatellar bursitis (clergyman's knee): This bursa is located just below the kneecap. Causes and symptoms are similar to prepatellar bursitis.
- Anserine bursitis: This bursa is located just beneath your knee on the inner part of your leg. It can be irritated in people who jog, have knock knees or osteoarthritis at the knees, or who are overweight.
- Iliotibial band syndrome: A thick, fibrous band runs alongside your hip and thigh and attaches to the outer part of your knee. Irritation of this band occurs with frequent knee bending. Jogging, physical activity, running down steep slopes, having bow legs, or turning your foot may produce this syndrome.

ANKLE AND FOOT

- Achilles tendinitis: This tendon attaches your calf muscle to your heel and lifts your heel off the ground. Achilles tendinitis usually occurs as a result of a sports injury or improperly fitted shoes.
- Achilles tendon rupture: Your Achilles tendon can be torn when your calf muscle suddenly tightens. This usually occurs in strenuous sports activities or in older people.
- Retrocalcaneal bursitis (pump bump): This bursa is located at the back of your heel. This type of bursitis commonly is associated with other conditions such as ankylosing spondylitis or rheumatoid arthritis. It can occur in healthy individuals from wearing improperly fitted shoes.
- Calcaneal bursitis: This bursa is located at the sole or bottom of your heel. Inflammation in the bursa usually produces pain in your heel.
- Plantar fasciitis: The plantar fascia is composed of thickened fibrous tissue that spans your heel to your toes on the sole of your foot. Running, prolonged standing, flat feet, heel spurs, and excessive weight can stress the fascia.
- Tarsal tunnel syndrome: The posterior tibial nerve supplies sensation to your toes and sole of your foot. This nerve is located in the inner part of your ankle. Compression on the posterior tibial nerve at your ankle can occur with ankle fractures, rheumatoid arthritis, or foot deformities when standing. The causes include heel spurs, excess weight, previous injury, and improperly fitted shoes.

Seek the care of a medical professional for your pain, don't treat yourself. The pain specialists at Newport Pain Management can help, call 949 759-8400 for an appointment today. For more info go to www.newportpain.com