

Shoulder Pain

This includes pain of the shoulder joint itself and shoulder blade. Most patients with shoulder pain are initially evaluated and treated by Orthopedic Surgeons. Pain clinics such as Newport Pain Management will become involved if patients have a non surgical problem, decline surgery, or find surgery had no benefit.

Rotator Cuff Problems

Rotator cuff problems are one of the single most common causes of shoulder pain. The rotator cuff is merely a collection of 4 muscles which surround the shoulder joint, and together with a piece of cartilage called the labrum, hold the joint together. Damage to any one of these muscles cause the shoulder to hurt, and to not move very well. Typically the patient with such injury will have worse pain at night, with pain shooting into the bicep muscle. He may have difficulty lifting his arm from the side. This can occur from falling forward onto an outstretched hand or with a shoulder dislocation. Damage is usually done to the supraspinatus tendon. Cortisone or other injections do not cure the tear, and thus tend not to give any sustained pain relief.

Impingement Problems

This is another common cause of shoulder pain. Typically parts of the shoulder joint get trapped between the arm bone and the area between the clavicle and the shoulder blade. This can lead to bursitis or even a rotator cuff tear. Again, pain is usually worse at night, and limits moving the arm overhead. Arthroscopy, and/or MRI are the common ways to diagnose the problem.

Tendinitis/Bursitis

This is an inflammation of the fluid filled sacks called bursa, or the fibrous strands of tissue surrounding the joint that attach to muscles known as tendons. Pain from these causes tends to be gradual, brought on repeated minor trauma or activity. This type of pain usually responds well to local injections of corticosteroids such as cortisone.

Scapulocostal syndrome is an often-overlooked cause of pain in the head, neck and shoulder blade areas. It is caused by bursitis of the

scapulothoracic bursa under the shoulder blade. Commonly patients complain of pain in the neck and back of the head, tricep muscle of the arm, upper chest, and forearm including the fingers. Reaching across the body often causes the pain to intensify. Local injections of anti-inflammatory agents into the bursa can dramatically reduce pain.

While there are a vast number of disorders causing pain not listed here, it is important to know a few basics before your visit with your doctor. Don't walk away from your visit without a firm diagnosis or plan to find a diagnosis, as most shoulder problems can be improved with early and thoughtful physician intervention.