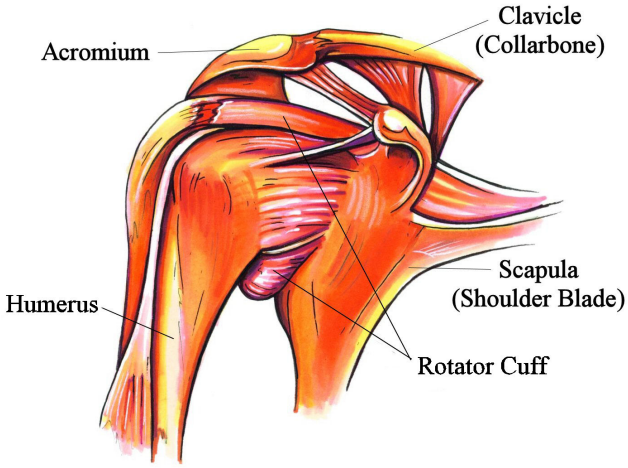
Rotator Cuff Tendonitis (Tendinitis, Tenosynovitis)

The rotator cuff is the collection of all the muscles and tendons (the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis, and teres minor muscles and their tendons) that help your shoulder stay in place. This unit holds the head of the upper arm bone *(humerus*) in the cup *(fossa*) of the shoulder blade (*scapula*). Basically, it connects the arm to the shoulder. Tendinitis is a swelling and irritation of the tissue, called cord like structures *(tendons*) that connect muscle to bone. It usually is caused by overusing the joint involved. When the tissue surrounding a tendon (the *synovium*) becomes inflamed, it is called tenosynovitis. This also is often the result of overuse in people whose jobs require repetitive (over and over again) types of motion.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a sling or splint for 10 days until the pain decreases, or as suggested by your caregiver.
- Apply ice to the injury for 10 to 20 minutes, 3 to 4 times per day. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
- Try to avoid use other than gentle range of motion while your shoulder is painful. Use and exercise only as directed by your caregiver. Stop exercises or range of motion if pain or discomfort increases, unless directed otherwise by your caregiver.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If you were give a shoulder sling and straps *(immobilizer*), do not remove it except as directed, or until you see a caregiver for a follow-up examination. If you need to remove it, move your arm as little as possible or as directed.
- You may want to sleep on several pillows at night to lessen swelling and pain.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Pain in your shoulder increases or new pain develops in your arm, hand, or fingers and is not relieved with medications.
- You develop new, unexplained symptoms, especially increased numbness in the hands or loss of strength, or you develop any worsening of the problems which brought you in for care.
- Your arm, hand, or fingers are numb or tingling.
- Your arm, hand, or fingers are swollen, painful, or turn white or blue.

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