

When It Feels Like More Than a “Cold Shoulder”



Because your shoulder provides the greatest range of motion of any joint in your body, it is more susceptible to a wide variety of injuries, including **rotator cuff tears** and a condition called “**frozen shoulder**.” Some common reasons for shoulder pain include **overuse and repetitive motion, sudden trauma** and **degeneration due to aging**. Symptoms of shoulder injuries include

- **pain;**
- **numbness;**
- **tingling;**
- **weakness;** or
- **difficulty with range of motion**, which can make daily activities, such as combing your hair or reaching for something, painful.

Tears that occur in the tendons and muscles of the shoulder that lift and rotate the arm are called rotator cuff tears. Left untreated, these muscles can develop scar tissue and, over time, lead to a significant loss of function.

“Frozen shoulder,” where the shoulder becomes stiff and immobile, often occurs for no known reason. It is more commonly associated with a variety of serious illnesses, including diabetes, thyroid problems, heart disease, Parkinson’s disease and even clinical depression. When shoulder injury or surgery is followed by prolonged joint immobilization, the risk of developing a frozen shoulder is highest.

Because frozen shoulder is often mistaken for rotator cuff tear, diagnosis may be difficult. Depending on the nature of your injury, your age and activity level, **treatment may include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to reduce swelling, ice and heat therapy, cortisone injections or surgery.**

In addition, **ongoing physical therapy** can help improve shoulder mobility. We can develop a plan of stretching and range-of-motion exercises, accompanied by education and support, to help you during recovery.