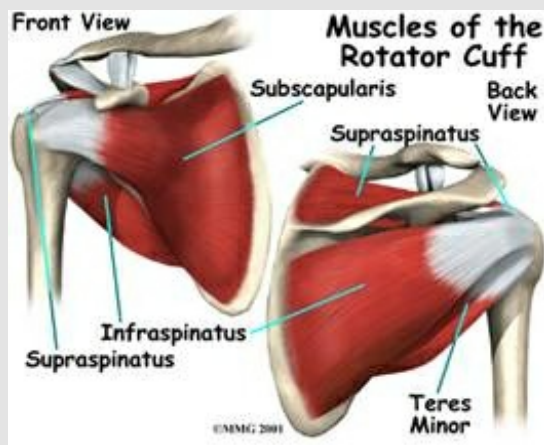




Rotator Cuff Injuries



Often times, you may hear someone say they have a "rotator cuff injury", but do you know what that really means? The rotator cuff is made up of four muscles that help move and stabilize the shoulder joint. Those four muscles are the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis, and teres minor. Damage to these muscles or their tendons are referred to as a "rotator cuff injury." A rotator cuff injury can cause significant pain and limit the shoulder range of motion. Often times a rotator cuff injury occurs from overuse, but can also be related to an acute injury, poor posture, or aging.

Signs and symptoms of a rotator cuff injury include pain and tenderness in your shoulder, shoulder weakness, and loss of shoulder range of motion. If any signs and symptoms are present, the person will try to avoid using the affected shoulder. The pain experienced with a rotator cuff injury is usually noticed when reaching overhead or behind you and while carrying a heavy item. Any pain that is lasting longer than a few days or the inability to reach around or overhead should be cause to have your shoulder checked out by a physician.



A "rotator cuff injury" is a general description of a more specific problem within the shoulder region. A rotator cuff injury can refer to any irritation or damage to the area, which can include tendinitis, bursitis, impingement, strain or tear. Certain individuals are more at risk for rotator cuff injuries than others. As you age, the risk of injury increases due to the normal wear and tear of a person's muscles over time. Overhead athletes (baseball, softball, tennis, etc.) and general laborers are more at risk due to the overuse of the muscles.

If your physician suspects a tear, he would schedule an MRI for you and surgery could be

possible. After seeing your physician, if he refers you to physical therapy, the physical therapist will set up a treatment plan designed for your specific rotator cuff injury. Physical therapy would include strengthening exercises, range of motion activities, posture and sleeping positions, iontophoresis for inflammation, and electrical stimulation with ice for pain management. Call us if you need to set up a Physical Therapy appointment at 404.419.7760.

