

Shoulder Osteoarthritis

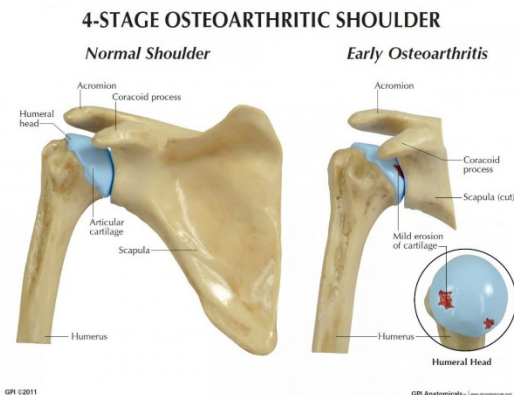
Common Questions



**More information can be found on
Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com**

What is shoulder osteoarthritis?

Shoulder osteoarthritis is also called glenohumeral osteoarthritis. It is also known as wear and tear of the shoulder joint. Osteoarthritis is a condition that wears away the smooth outer covering of the shoulder joint. This smooth surface is called the articular cartilage and it becomes frayed and rough. The protective space between the bones decreases and the shoulder joint bones rub against each other causing pain.



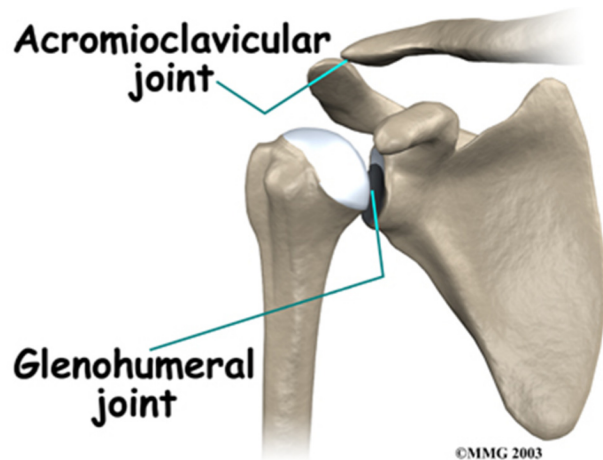
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Is there more than one joint of the shoulder that can be affected by osteoarthritis?

Shoulder osteoarthritis can affect the actual shoulder joint or it can also affect the acromioclavicular joint. The acromioclavicular joint or AC joint as it is called, is affected more often with osteoarthritis than the shoulder joint itself.



Are there different types of arthritis of the shoulder joint?

Yes, besides osteoarthritis there is also rheumatoid arthritis which is caused when the body's immune system attacks itself. It is a chronic disease that attacks multiple joints throughout the body besides the shoulder.

What is post traumatic arthritis of the shoulder joint?

Post traumatic arthritis is a form of osteoarthritis that develops after a shoulder fracture, dislocation or other traumatic injury to the shoulder joint.

What is rotator cuff arthropathy?

Arthritis can develop in the shoulder joint after a large rotator cuff tear is not repaired. The torn rotator cuff can no longer hold the head of the humerus in the glenoid socket and the humerus

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moves upward and rubs against the undersurface of the acromion. This can cause severe pain and weakness and is a difficult problem to treat without surgery.

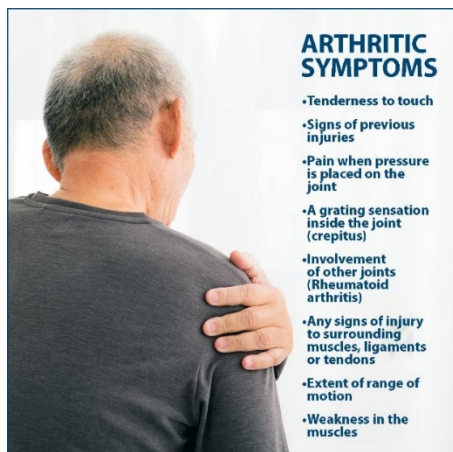


What is avascular necrosis of the shoulder joint?

Avascular necrosis of the shoulder joint is a painful condition when the blood supply to head of the humerus is disrupted. When this occurs, the bone cells in the humeral head or the ball of the shoulder joint can die. This can lead to destruction of the shoulder joint or collapse of the humeral head. This can lead to shoulder joint pain and arthritis.

What are the signs and symptoms of shoulder arthritis?

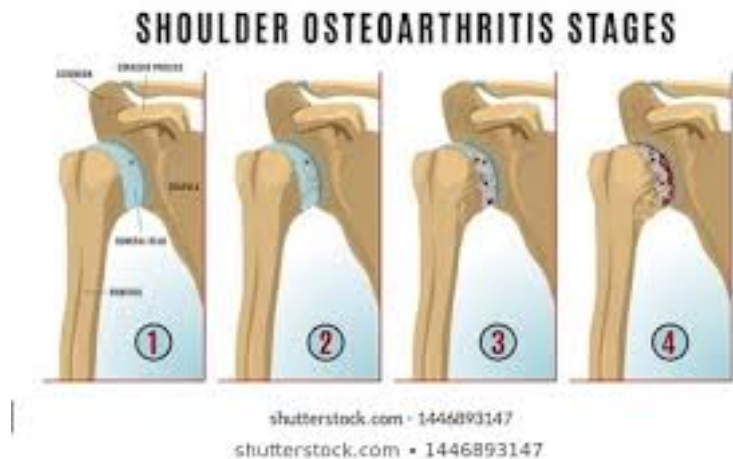
Pain is the most common symptom of shoulder arthritis. It is caused by the bones of the shoulder joint rubbing against each other and this is called crepitus. At first the pain may come and go, but it tends to increase with time, usually over several years. The pain is most common at night and makes it difficult to sleep. There may also be a loss of motion and more movement causes pain. There may also be swelling with atrophy of the muscles along with tenderness of the shoulder joint as the arthritis progresses.



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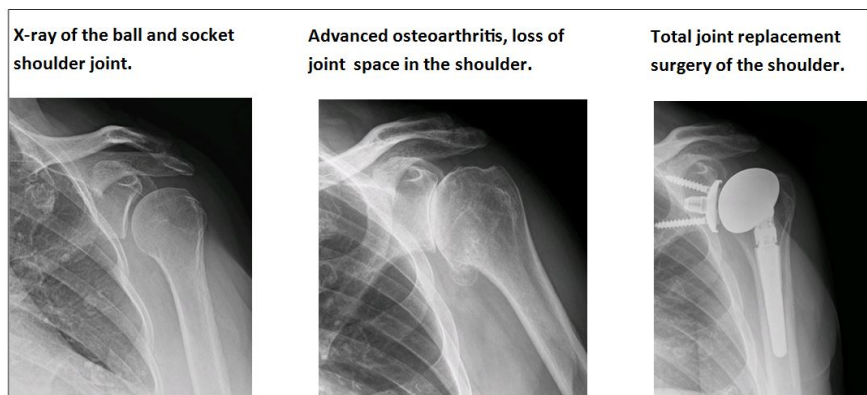


How is glenohumeral or shoulder arthritis diagnosed?

The doctor will first obtain a history of the patient's symptoms and health over the past several years. Those who suffer from shoulder arthritis typically report an increase in pain over several years. The doctor will ask if the patient has any conditions that may be the underlying cause of osteoarthritis such as previous trauma or surgery to the shoulder or arthritis affecting other joints of the body. Other conditions that can also lead to shoulder arthritis include a previous infection of the shoulder joint or a long standing rotator cuff tear that was never repaired.

Will I need x-rays to diagnose shoulder arthritis?

X-rays of the shoulder joint are the first step in helping to diagnose shoulder arthritis. With an x-ray, the doctor can see structural changes that indicate shoulder arthritis such as loss of the joint space and bone spurs or osteophytes.

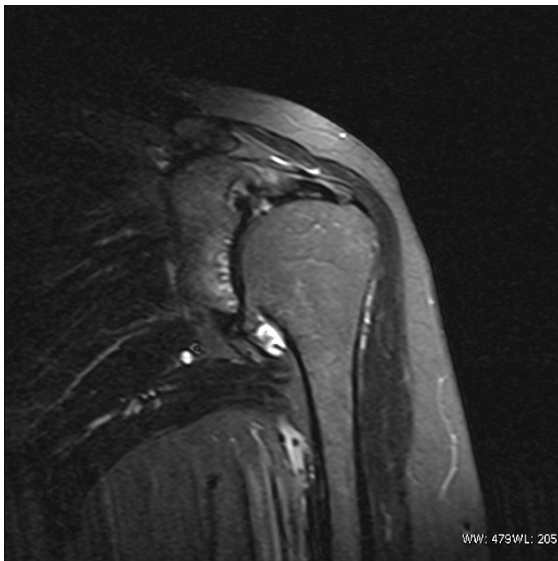


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Is an MRI or other tests needed to diagnose shoulder arthritis?

Although not always necessary, an MRI can help provide information about the other soft tissue structures of the shoulder joint including the ligaments and the rotator cuff muscles and tendons. A CT scan also be helpful as it may show any other structural abnormalities that an x-ray does not show.



How is shoulder arthritis treated without surgery?

Non-operative treatment of shoulder arthritis is managed with rest, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications and an exercise program to maintain range of motion and strength. Other supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate may also help with the symptoms of shoulder arthritis by helping to neutralize the destructive enzymes of arthritis and possibly by

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serving as building blocks for new cartilage formation. More research needs to be done on these non-prescription medications but there does not appear to be any downside to taking them besides their cost.

What about cortisone injections for my shoulder arthritis?

A cortisone injection may be recommended for an arthritic shoulder joint that does not respond to regular anti-inflammatory medications. It helps reduce pain and swelling but will not cure the arthritis. Eventually the effect of the cortisone will wear off and the pain usually returns.

What about hyaluronic acid injections for my shoulder arthritis?

Hyaluronic acid injections for the shoulder joint are currently not FDA approved as they are for the knee joint. With that being said, your doctor can inject them and use them as an off label medication for your shoulder arthritis. Hyaluronic acid is injected directly into the joint in order to improve joint lubrication and reduce friction during movement. This can help the pain associated with shoulder arthritis.

What about stem cell injections for my shoulder arthritis?

Stem cell injections for shoulder arthritis or any other type of arthritis are purely experimental at this point. Many doctors are charging high prices for these stem cell injections but more research needs to be done before they can be recommended.

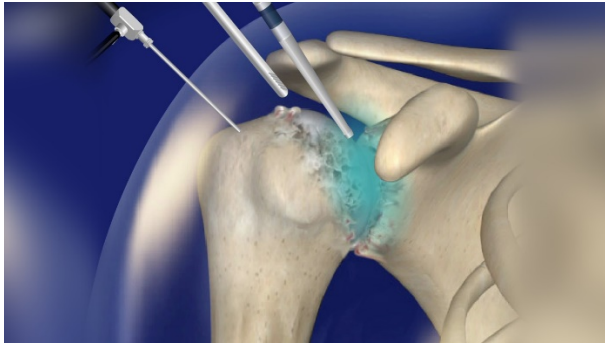
What about PRP injections for my shoulder arthritis?

PRP or platelet rich plasma injections for shoulder arthritis is also experimental. There have been some promising research studies for using PRP for knee arthritis but very few studies using it for shoulder arthritis. Most doctors recommend trying a cortisone injection first and then if that does not work, then trying a one-time PRP injection.

What about arthroscopic surgery for my shoulder arthritis?

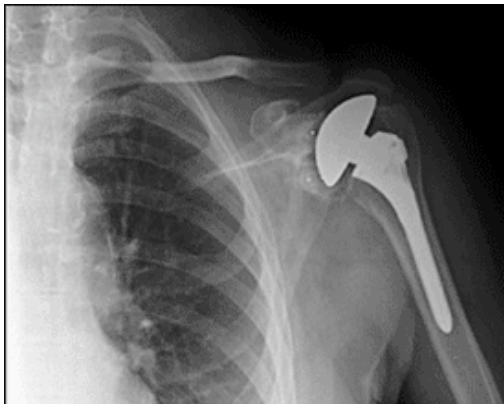
If the shoulder arthritis is not too advanced, arthroscopic surgery or debridement of the arthritis can be very helpful. With this minimally invasive technique, loose pieces of cartilage can be removed or smoothed down to help reduce pain, swelling and to increase motion. It can also delay the need for a shoulder replacement in the future.

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What about a shoulder replacement surgery for my shoulder arthritis?

A shoulder replacement surgery is done when all other treatments do not work. It is typically reserved for those patients who have severe or end stage arthritis. It can be very helpful in reducing pain and increasing function of the shoulder joint.



What are the possible complications from shoulder replacement surgery?

With any surgery, there are always risks including the possibility of infection, blood vessel or nerve damage. One of the other risks is the shoulder replacement becoming loose and having to be replaced.

What are the results of shoulder replacement surgery?

Shoulder replacement surgery is a very good surgery for those that need it. It can reduce pain and increase function in almost all patients so they can return to their normal activities of daily living without pain.

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What if I have any other questions?

If you have any other questions, more information can be found on Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com or just call Dr. Stetson's office, we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

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