

## ROTATOR CUFF

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT & PREVENTION

Your **rotator cuff** is made up of the muscles and tendons in your shoulder which connect your upper arm bone with your shoulder blade. They also help hold the ball of your upper arm bone firmly in your shoulder socket.

A rotator cuff injury includes any type of irritation or damage to your rotator cuff muscles or tendons. About half of the time, a rotator cuff injury can heal with self-care measures or exercise therapy.



### CAUSES

Four major muscles (subscapularis, supraspinatus, infraspinatus and teres minor) and their tendons connect your upper arm bone (humerus) with your shoulder blade (scapula). A rotator cuff injury, which is fairly common, involves any type of irritation or damage to your rotator cuff muscles or tendons, including:



- General wear and tear as you get older or participate in repetitive movement activities
- Tendinitis. Tendons in your rotator cuff can become inflamed due to overuse or overload.
- Bursitis. The fluid-filled sac (bursa) between your shoulder joint and rotator cuff tendons can become irritated and inflamed.
- Strain or tear. Left untreated, tendinitis can weaken a tendon and lead to chronic tendon degeneration or to a tendon tear.

### TREATMENT & INTERVENTIONS

Most of the time, rest and exercise therapy are used as a treatment. Your doctor or a physical therapist will talk with you about specific exercises designed to help heal your injury, improve the flexibility of your rotator cuff and shoulder muscles, and provide balanced shoulder muscle strength. Depending on the severity of your injury, physical therapy may take from several weeks to several months.

# ROTATOR CUFF (CONT.)

Other rotator cuff injury treatments may include:

- **Steroid injections.** Depending on the severity of your pain, your doctor may use a corticosteroid injection to relieve inflammation and pain.
- **Surgery.** If you have a large tear in your rotator cuff, you may need surgery to repair the tear. Sometimes during this kind of surgery, doctors may remove a bone spur or calcium deposits.
- **Arthroplasty.** Some long-standing rotator cuff tears over time may contribute to the development of rotator cuff arthropathy, which can include severe arthritis. In such cases, your doctor may discuss with you more extensive surgical options, including partial shoulder replacement (hemiarthroplasty) or total shoulder replacement (prosthetic arthroplasty).



## SSM HEALTH CARDINAL GLENNON SPORTSCARE

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, SSM Health

Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLUCare Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at **314-577-5640** or visit us at [cardinalglennon.com/sportscare](http://cardinalglennon.com/sportscare).

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, **24 hours a day in the ER** at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles.



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