

# Shoulder Bursitis

## What is shoulder bursitis?

Shoulder bursitis is an irritation or inflammation of the bursa in your shoulder. A bursa is a fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between tendons, bones, and skin.

## How does it occur?

The shoulder bursa can become inflamed from repetitive motion of the shoulder. Shoulder bursitis often occurs in sports with overhead activities such as swimming, tennis, or throwing. It may also occur in occupational activities such as painting or carpentry.

## What are the symptoms?

You have pain on the outer front side of your shoulder. Your shoulder may hurt when you lift your arm above your head. The outer side of your shoulder may become swollen and may at times feel warm.

## How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will review your symptoms and examine your shoulder.

## How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- ▶ ice packs on your shoulder for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 to 3 days or until the pain goes away
- ▶ anti-inflammatory medication or other pain medications
- ▶ an injection of a corticosteroid medication into the bursa to reduce the inflammation and pain
- ▶ exercises to help in your recovery.

## When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon your shoulder recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has

been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

You may safely return to your sport or activity when:

- ▶ Your injured shoulder has full range of motion without pain.
- ▶ Your injured shoulder has regained normal strength compared to the uninjured shoulder.

In throwing sports, you must gradually rebuild your tolerance to throwing. This means you should start with gentle tossing and gradually throw harder. In contact sports, your shoulder must not be tender to touch and contact should progress from minimal contact to harder contact.

## How can I prevent shoulder bursitis?

Be sure to warm up properly and stretch your shoulder before such activities as throwing, playing tennis, or swimming. If your shoulder begins to hurt during these activities, you may need to slow down until the pain goes away.

