

## Education

### Wrist Tendonitis

#### What is wrist tendonitis?

Tendons are bands of connective tissue that attach muscle to bone. Tendonitis occurs when a tendon is inflamed from overuse. Your wrist moves in many directions, including down, up, in, and out. The muscles and tendons that perform these movements may become overused and inflamed. The muscles and tendons that cross your wrist and attach to your thumb may also become inflamed.

#### How does it occur?

Tendonitis is a problem caused by repetitive use. Possible overuse activities include throwing, catching, bowling, hitting a tennis ball, typing, or sewing.

#### What are the symptoms?

You have pain in the wrist and forearm with repetitive activity. The tendon that is inflamed is tender to the touch. You may have swelling around the inflamed tendon.

#### How is it diagnosed?

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

#### How is it treated?

Treatment may include the following:

- applying an ice pack for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 to 3 days or until the pain goes away
- elevating your wrist on a pillow while sleeping or on the back of a chair or couch while sitting
- wearing a splint that immobilizes the wrist or thumb or taping the wrist or thumb
- taking anti-inflammatory medicine prescribed by your health care provider
- doing stretching and strengthening exercises.

In many cases of tendonitis, the injury occurs because of poor technique in a sporting activity. Your health care provider may review your technique and try to help you change it.

While you are recovering from your injury you will need to change your sport or activity to one that does not make your condition worse. For example, you may need to run instead of play racquet sports. The most important treatment for tendonitis is to change your activity.

#### How long will the effects last?

The effects of wrist tendonitis vary. A tendon that is only mildly inflamed and has just started to hurt may improve within a few weeks, while a tendon that is significantly inflamed and has been painful for a long time may take up to a few months to improve. You need to stop doing the activities that cause pain until your bursa has healed. If you continue doing activities that cause pain, your symptoms will return and it will take longer to recover.

#### When can I return to my normal activities?

Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. Return to your activities will be determined by how soon your wrist recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury has occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better. The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your normal activities as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury.

You may return to your normal activities after your wrist injury when the injured wrist has full range of motion without pain. Your injured wrist, hand, and forearm need to have the same strength as the uninjured side.

#### How can I prevent wrist tendonitis?

Tendonitis is caused from overuse. Use proper technique in activities such as throwing, hitting a tennis ball, and typing. You should not continue to do these activities when the warning signs of tendonitis begin.

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