



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# Sports Medicine: Shoulder Impingement Syndrome

Impingement syndrome is pain in the shoulder caused by pinching of the rotator cuff muscles beneath the edge of the shoulder blade (acromion).

## Signs and symptoms

- pain in the front and top of the shoulder
- tenderness or swelling over the shoulder
- loss of strength
- limited motion of the shoulder
- pain that is worse with reaching overhead
- aching when not using the arm
- a crackling sound when moving the arm

## Increased risk

- overhead sports (baseball, tennis, swimming or volleyball)
- weightlifting and bodybuilding
- previous injury to the rotator cuff or shoulder
- poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility)
- poor warm-up before practice or competition
- bone spurs in the shoulder

## Treatment

- Medicine

- Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) may be recommended. Take these as directed by your health care provider.
- Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), may be used.
- Use of cold and heat
  - Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
  - Heat should not be used on a new injury. It may be used before performing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your health care provider or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or a warm soak.
- Rehab
  - Stretching and strengthening exercises, and modifying activity that caused the problem, may be done at home. A referral to a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be recommended.
- Injection
  - If the injury does not improve with rehab exercises, a steroid injection may be done.
- Surgery
  - In rare cases, surgery may be needed to correct the problem.

## How to prevent

- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Allow time for ample rest and recovery between practices and competitions.
- Maintain suitable conditioning, shoulder flexibility, muscle strength and endurance.
- Use proper technique with training and activity.

## When to call the health care provider

Call your health care provider or the **Sports Medicine team** at **614-355-6000** if:

- symptoms get worse or do not improve in 4 to 6 weeks despite treatment
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit **NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling** or scan this code with your camera phone.

