



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Inflammation of a tendon (tendinitis) and the lining of the tendon sheath (tenosynovitis). They often occur at the same time. Tendons are made up of tough, fibrous, cord-like tissue. A typical skeletal muscle has a tendon on each end that attaches to the bone.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Limited movement, tenderness, pain, and swelling around the inflamed tendon. Common sites are the shoulder, elbow, Achilles' tendon (heel), or hamstring.
- Weakness in the tendon caused by calcium deposits that often accompany tendinitis.

CAUSES

Inflammation or a small tear in a tendon. The tendons become inflamed for a variety of reasons. Inflammation is a reaction of the body's tissues to injury, infection, or irritation. The four signs of inflammation are redness, swelling, heat, and pain.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Injury or overuse, usually from an athletic activity, exercising, or during work.
- Incorrect movement and strain during activity. For example, repeatedly holding and swinging a tennis racket incorrectly may cause tendinitis at the elbow (tennis elbow).
- Certain joint diseases (rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, gout, and Reiter's disease).
- Aging (tendons are more prone to injury).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Gradually build up the intensity and frequency of an activity.
- Avoid overuse of muscles and tendons. Maintain strength and flexibility. Warm up before each workout and stretch afterwards.
- Learn the proper techniques for any exercise or sport you intend to do regularly.
- Wear proper gear for any sport or exercise activity including well-fitting shoes.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable with treatment and rest of the affected tendon area. Pain and swelling usually decrease in a few days. Allow 6 weeks for complete healing.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Chronic disability.
- Tendon rupture.
- Frozen shoulder.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Many cases of tendinitis are self-treated.
- See your health care provider if symptoms persist or are more severe. A physical exam of the affected area will be done and questions asked about your symptoms and activities. X-rays do not show tendon problems, but they may be done if an injury occurred.
- Treatment may involve rest, ice or heat, drugs, range-of-motion exercises, and steps to prevent recurrence.
- When resting, sleeping, or sitting, place the injured area on a pillow—at or above heart level.
- Wrap the area in a compressive (Ace) bandage to reduce swelling.
- Apply ice packs to the affected area. Do this several times a day for the first 24 to 48 hours. Then, apply them twice a day until pain is gone. You can apply heat if it feels good. Take hot showers, soak in a warm bath, apply warm compresses, or use a heating pad.
- You may want to use a sling or splint for an arm or shoulder to limit movement. Use crutches, a cane or a brace, for affected leg, knee, or heel if needed.
- Surgery may be recommended in chronic tendinitis. Physical therapy helps to regain strength and flexibility.

MEDICATIONS

- Use nonprescription nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and pain relievers such as ibuprofen.
- Steroid injection for painful tendons may be prescribed. This reduces pain and inflammation and allows movement. Injections are done just a few times because steroids can weaken the tendon.

ACTIVITY

- Resume normal activities as symptoms improve.
- After a few days, begin range-of-motion exercises to prevent stiffness in the area. Do them 3 to 4 times a day.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of tendinitis.
- Pain and swelling increase despite treatment.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page