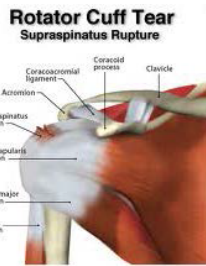


## Shoulder Rotator Cuff Tear



A rotator cuff tear is amongst the most common conditions affecting the shoulder. It is a tear of one or more of the tendons of the four rotator cuff muscles. A rotator cuff injury can be acute or chronic. The tendons of the rotator cuff, not the muscles, are most commonly involved and of the four, the supraspinatus most frequently, as it passes below the acromion. Such a tear usually occurs at its point of insertion onto the humeral head as the tendon inserts into bone.

Many rotator cuff tears are asymptomatic. They are known to increase in frequency with age and the most common cause is age-related degeneration and, less frequently, sports injuries or trauma.

Symptoms of a rotator cuff tear may occur immediately after trauma (acute) or develop gradually over time (chronic). Acute injury present with severe pain that radiates through the arm, and limited range of motion, specifically during elevation of the arm. Chronic tears occur among individuals who constantly participate in overhead activities. Symptoms arising as a result of chronic tears include sporadic worsening of pain, and pain at rest, loss of muscle bulk, and inability to move or lift the arm sufficiently.



### Treatment



Many patients with rotator cuff tears can be treated symptomatically with anti-inflammatories and activity modification, however if the symptoms persist and are sufficiently disabling then repair of the torn tendons may be attempted if suitable. This is usually done under a general anaesthetic through arthroscopic (keyhole) surgery with multiple small (<1cm) incisions around the shoulder. The tear is usually repaired back down to bone with special suture anchors and any overlying bone spur is shaved off to relieve the compression of the rotator cuff. Arthroscopic surgery allows for a shorter recovery time and predictably less pain in the first few days following the procedure.

The duration of stay in hospital is only one night however the rehabilitation program after repair can take 6-12 weeks.

Most patients who undergo rotator cuff surgery experience considerable reduction in pain and improvement in shoulder strength and range of motion. If you have symptoms of shoulder pain please discuss your symptoms with your local medical practitioner and if appropriate a referral can be obtained for review by Dr Khatib in one of our clinic locations.