

Treatment and Diagnosis of Common Shoulder Conditions

By: Daniel C. Fabiano, MD, FAAOS

Patients of all ages present to their physician with a variety of conditions relating to shoulder problems. Prompt referral to an orthopaedic surgeon can help to establish effective treatment options for the patient. Many conditions can be treated non-operatively along with the expertise of a physical therapist through appropriate physiotherapy. Other conditions may require that of surgical intervention followed by directed physiotherapy.

The shoulder, being a ball and socket joint, has an extremely wide range of motion. This anatomy enables us to reach and rotate our arm further than any other joint. The shoulder joint is made up of the humeral head (ball) and glenoid (socket) which in turn is enclosed by the capsule or lining. Outside the lining is the rotator cuff or tendons which “rotate” the ball within the socket.

Common problems that occur with the shoulder include:

1. Loss of Motion:

Frozen shoulder or adhesive capsulitis: This condition can occur without a precipitating incident, post surgical or post traumatic, or secondary to arthritic disease.

2. Lack of Stability:

The shoulder can become unstable after a traumatic injury, i.e., dislocation with recurrence, or without trauma secondary to loose or lax joint tissue.

3. Lack of Strength:

The rotator cuff can become diseased through natural attrition or secondary to injury (trauma or rupture).

Nerve impairment or nerve damage can cause the shoulder to lose function (Cervical disk disease, brachial plexus, etc.).

4. Other Conditions:

a. Impingement:

This condition is where the rotator cuff continues to be irritated or worn through overhead activity. Impingement can ultimately lead to a partial or complete tear of the rotator cuff.

b. Arthritis (Degenerative or Inflammatory):

A loss of the cartilage within the joint.

c. **Avascular Necrosis** or loss of blood supply to the humeral head (ball) with subsequent collapse.

Treatment for these conditions may include anti-inflammatory medication, physical therapy, corticosteroid injections and/or modification of activities.

Surgery may be performed to remove offending spurs for impingement, repair of torn rotator cuff tendons, tightening of the capsule or lining for instability, and joint replacement for severe arthritis or avascular necrosis. Frozen shoulders can respond solely to physical therapy or through forced manipulation



under anesthesia followed by intense physical therapy. Neurologic compromise may or may not be curable through a variety of means. Recovery from surgery will always depend on the health, age, quality of the patient's tissue, and compliance with physical therapy.

It is important to follow your orthopaedic surgeon's recommendations along with the physical therapy treatment program.



Dr. Daniel Fabiano is an Orthopaedic surgeon at Physicians Clinic of Iowa in Cedar Rapids. He completed a Fellowship in Knee and Shoulder Surgery/ Sports Medicine at Orlando Regional Medical Center, Orlando, FL. His Orthopaedic Surgery Residency at the University of Illinois Hospital, Dept. of Orthopaedics in Chicago, IL, and his Medical degree at Hahnemann University School of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. His primary interests include Sports Medicine, Arthroscopy, Knee and Shoulder Surgery including Joint Replacement.

For more information:

Daniel C. Fabiano, MD, FAAOS
Physicians Clinic of Iowa, PC
PCI Main Building
600 7th St. SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
319-398-1500

Accelerated Orthopaedic University

Accelerated University offers Case Managers, Adjusters and other referral sources the opportunity to earn Continuing Education Units. We host a variety of complimentary medical lectures presented by our Network of Healthcare Providers. To schedule a CEU seminar relating to the topics of the Shoulder and Cervical Spine or any other topic hosted by Accelerated, contact Gina Boomershine, PT, Industrial Rehabilitation Manager at 515-979-9388.

2007 New Additions to our current Continuing Education Courses:

- Introduction to Hand Splints - 1.0hrs
- Cumulative Trauma Treatment and Prevention - 1.5hrs
- Medicare Set-Asides for Workers' Compensation and General Liability - 1.0hrs
- The Role of Vocational Rehabilitation - 1.0hrs
- Total Hip and Total Knee Replacements - 1.0hrs

Please see our website for a complete list of 2007 CEU Course Offerings. If there is a topic of interest not listed, please let us know. We would be glad to accommodate your needs. Presentations can be conducted at your office. Complimentary lunch and CEUs are provided. To schedule a CEU presentation, please contact: Gina Boomershine, PT, Industrial Rehabilitation Manager at 515-979-9388.