

## SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT

The shoulder has numerous muscles and tendons controlling movement, among these are the tendons of the rotator cuff, the major ones include supraspinatus, infraspinatus, biceps and subscapularis. They pass from the scapula (shoulder blade) to the humeral head (ball of the arm) under an arch called the acromion.

As a consequence of wear and tear, trauma or a prominent acromial bone spur, the cuff tendons can become irritated and swollen and rub against the acromion, causing pain especially when you lift your arm above chest height. This is called impingement / bursitis / tendonitis.

Rotator cuff problems occur more commonly as you get older. It is rare for a patient younger than 30 years old to have impingement.

### Non Operative Treatment

Non operative treatment includes physiotherapy (incorporating exercises of stretching and strengthening), often breast stroke swimming, anti-inflammatory medicine, activity modification and cortisone (steroid) injection. If this does not help in reducing the pain or if there is poor shoulder function, then surgery is recommended.

### Surgery for Impingement (No Cuff Tear)

The surgery is often done as a day only procedure, but many people prefer to stay overnight so we can look after your post-operative pain and dressings.

With the arthroscope we can examine all the structures inside and outside your shoulder, confirm the diagnosis and perform the operation without having to make a big incision through muscles that is often painful. By using the arthroscope any other damage can be dealt with at the same time.

With a special shaver we shave away any bone spurs or scar tissue that are rubbing on the tendon (acromioplasty and bursectomy), so that it will glide under the acromion and your arm will no longer catch when you lift your it above chest height.

### Return to work

Office workers can return to work within 10 days. Workers needing to go back to light manual tasks (eg cash register work) would need 8-12 weeks for recovery.

I would like you to avoid work using the arm at shoulder height and above (painting) or repetitive work (like picking and packing or gardening) for at least three months, while the tendons and subacromial space settles down.

Approximately 90% of patients have a substantial improvement in pain, movement and strength with this type of surgery.

What if you have more questions?

Please feel free to call me at my rooms on (02) 9409 0500 and I'll call you back as soon as I can.

**GREGGORY BURROW**