

# Glenelg Orthopaedics

Providing Quality Orthopaedic Care

Phone 8376 9988

Consulting Glenelg, Mawson Lakes, Torrens Park and Middleton



## The New Royal Adelaide

### Changing Times

Its great to see the New RAH nearing completion and looking like opening.

Working in public health as well as private now for over 27 years ( unbelievable it seems like yesterday was my internship), I've certainly seen a few things. I know that change is always resisted, but invariably things seem to work out.

No matter what your thoughts, its still exciting to see a brand new hospital at the hub of a medical precinct and with the new medical school a stones throw away, it must be very exciting to be training as a medical student.

I myself will look forward to being involved in teaching in this arena, and feel priveleged to see their enthusiasm and being involved in shaping the young doctors, coming through the ranks. I know support is very important and that is why I always am happy to be contacted for advice if required. Gavin Nimon



### Rotator Cuff Edition

In our 2nd edition, we visit the symptoms and treatment options for the rotator cuff. I hope it helps you in assessing and treating this common problem.



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**FRACS**

Fellow of the  
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

# The Rotator Cuff, Bursitis and Cuff tears

## The Quiet Epidemic



It seems that every person at sometime has developed Shoulder pain, What is the most common cause, and what is the treatment algorithm.

### Firstly, what is the rotator cuff?

The rotator cuff is a group of four tendons which encircle the shoulder and provide stability. They also provide fine motor movements, they support the shoulder for any motion of the upper limb and stabilise the ball in the socket (humeral head in the glenoid) for all activities of use. The shape of the shoulder is provided by the deltoid which covers the rotator cuff and provides the main motor power for the shoulder. The Deltoid is the muscle that is incorporated when doing heavy activities but the rotator cuff and the four tendons in the rotator cuff provide fine movement.

The supraspinatus and subscapularis in particular are important in stabilising the shoulder and also are at risk of degenerating and tearing. Tears occur through excessive use of the tendon and also are associated with ageing. A Factor that contributes to ageing such as smoking, has a detrimental effect on the tendons of the rotator cuff. The tendons have a limited blood supply thus preventing a good repair response. Not all tendon tears need to be repaired. If however a tendon tear becomes symptomatic or occurs abnormally early, ie in a young person, then a repair may be warranted.

### What sports are commonly associated with rotator cuff injuries?

The sports that particularly cause tears are those that involve overhead activity such as tennis, in serving, volleyball, swimming and basketball.

### What symptoms to people develop with rotator cuff issues?

The main symptom is pain which is experienced laterally down the arm, ie from the tip of the shoulder radiating laterally down towards the elbow. It is worse with movement, in particular movement above about 70 degrees of flexion or on attempting to lift the arm up and improves at full range of motion, in other words there is a painful arc between the 70 degree range up to 120 degrees. Often there is pain which is unremitting at night and can cause people to lose sleep but at rest during the day without using the arm, the pain is minimal.

### What are the treatment options for rotator cuff issues?

- 1) The vast majority of rotator cuff symptoms can be treated with rest, anti inflammatories and avoiding the inciting factors, ie things that cause discomfort.
- 2) If this fails to settle over a



two to four week period then a course of physiotherapy, working on strengthening the muscles in a painless fashion using low resistance Theraband (rubber bands) is appropriate.

3) A steroid injections will help hasten the recovery and up to three injections can be given over a six month period. If after three to six months the symptoms have not improved then it is worth seeking the advice of an orthopaedic surgeon, who would advise surgical options

### What surgery is available?

The surgical options involve an arthroscopic (keyhole) inspection of the joint and the subacromial



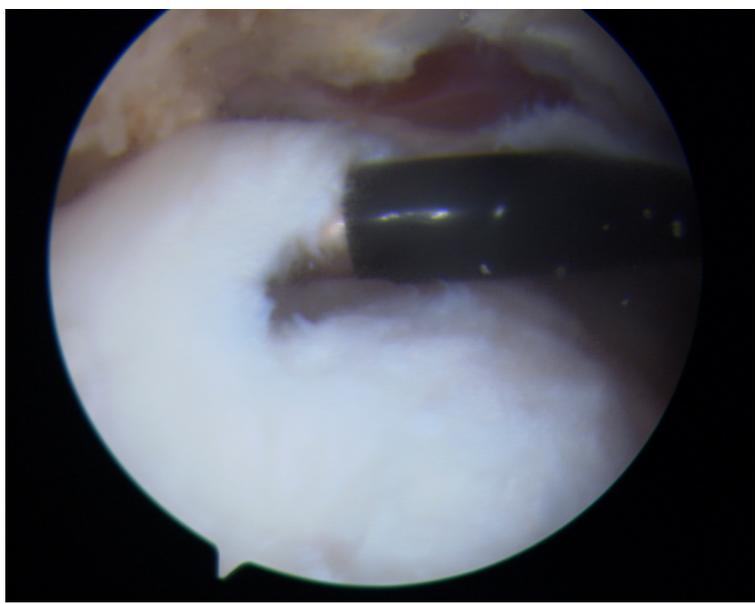
space to ascertain if there is bone catching on the tendon to inflame the tendons. Then a debridement of the inflamed bursa and decompression (removal of excess bone) is undertaken.

Such a procedure is done through three small 1cm incisions but does involve a one night stay in hospital. Recovery can take three to four weeks before symptoms are slightly improved and can continue to improve up to three to four months or longer, depending on the person's circumstances.

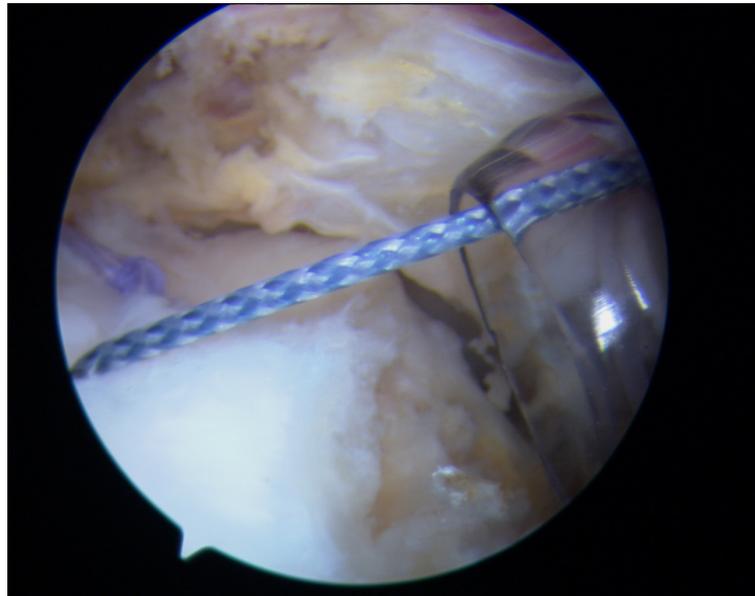
In cases in which there is a rotator cuff tear, this can be repaired totally arthroscopically but will require a period in a sling for tendon healing.

#### What are the Results of Shoulder Surgery.

The average person with classic features and signs of rotator cuff disease would expect a 90% chance of improvement from surgery.



Rotator Cuff Tear identified at Surgery ( not identified at Ultrasound preoperatively)



Arthroscopic repair of Rotator Cuff.



#### Reverse Total Shoulder Replacement

-a solution for a difficult problem-

Fractures like the one on the left have in the past been a vexing issue. Left alone, and the results are poor. Yes it heals, but the patient is left with poor function and pain.

Attempt of fixation results in the tuberosities failing to heal and therefore the tendons pull off the bone with the tuberosity.

The Reverse shoulder allows us to attempt fixation, ( and repair the cuff is possible ) with the reassurance that if the tendons pull away, the shoulder replacement will still function. The end results are remarkable.



# GLENELG ORTHOPAEDICS

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## GP Advice

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" We believe it's important to be available to help. It does not matter if it's a patient of mine or not, I am always available to offer advice or recommend a treatment plan. Do not hesitate to contact me should the need arise."



Medical treatment is a team effort, that's why there is  
always a friend available to give advice.



Dr Gavin Nimon teaching  
University of Adelaide 4th year  
Medical Students.

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