

Shoulder, Arm & Hand Problems

Many Names for Shoulder Problems

Neuritis, bursitis, neuralgia, rheumatism, frozen shoulder, fibrositis, sprains, strains, “poor circulation” and rotator cuff problems are some of the terms used to describe neck, shoulder and arm conditions.

Brain Control

What controls your shoulders, arms and hands? The brain “talks” with the rest of your body through a vast communications system made up of nerves called the nervous system. Billions of nerves extend from your brain as a large bundle called the spinal cord, travel down your back inside your spinal column and exit between your spinal bones to go to nearly every part of your body.

Plexus

Some nerves go straight to their point of destination but some first mix with other nerves to form complicated nerve networks called a nerve “plexus.”

Brachial Plexus

The brachial plexus is made up of nerves that come out of the middle and lower neck and upper back. After they form the brachial plexus they branch off to supply different area, especially the shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers.

Brachial Plexus Injury

People sometimes blame their joint or organ problems on “old age” even though they have many other joints and organs that are just as old that have no problems. Irritation to the nerves would be a more accurate analysis.

The nerves that make up the brachial plexus may be irritated as they exit the spinal column. This may occur when the spinal bones in the neck and upper back are misaligned and damage the very nerves they are supposed to protect.

What causes the spinal bones to misalign? Nearly any injury or “trauma” could do it. Old injuries such as childhood falls, sports mishaps, car accidents (especially whiplash – a situation where the head and neck are suddenly “snapped” forward and backward) and sleeping in an awkward position could damage the spine. Even birth stress could cause spinal nerve damage that can affect the arms, shoulders and hands.

Results of Brachial Plexus Injury

Depending on which brachial plexus nerves are damaged, different symptoms may be experienced. There may be muscle weakness; there may be neck pain or stiffness with or without pain that spreads or “radiates” to the shoulder, arm, wrist, hand or fingers. Sometimes there’s numbness, sometimes there’s pain and numbness and sometimes there are strange nerve sensations (“pins and needles”).

Other Conditions

Because of the complicated way nerves interrelate, headache; migraine; facial pain; dizziness; limited, painful or stiff motion of the head and neck; throat conditions; thyroid and nasal problems; epilepsy and even lower back pain have been reported as a result of neck or brachial nerve plexus irritation.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or CTS is now so common it’s called an “occupational disease.” Symptoms include tingling and numbness in the hand, fingers and wrist; pain so intense that it awakens you at night and similar symptoms in the upper arm, elbow, shoulder or neck. “Faulty enervation caused by

spinal joint lesions in one of the main factors in the production of wrist swelling, carpal tunnel syndrome, [and] tennis elbow. Increasing numbers of CTS sufferers are seeking out the non-drug, non-surgical approach that chiropractic offers.

The Chiropractic Approach

Although chiropractic's success with shoulder, arm, wrist and hand problems is well documented, chiropractic is really not a "treatment" for those problems.

The chiropractic approach to shoulder and hand problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, brachial plexus injury or to body structure to locate and correct a serious nerve-damaging structural condition called a subluxation.

Subluxation Complex

A subluxation is a misalignment of your spinal bones that puts stress on your nerves, bones, ligaments, discs, tendons, muscles, tissues and internal organs. Your entire body and its proper functioning is essential for physical and neurological health. If there is any damage to it, the effects can be profound. Your doctor of chiropractic is specially trained to locate and correct subluxations. Unless corrected, subluxation in your body can cause or contribute to many health conditions and prevent or interfere with the normal healing process.

After your chiropractor has located your subluxations he or she will "adjust" or correct them. This will release structural and nerve pressure and help restore the healthy flow of nerve impulses between your brain and your body parts and help rebalance your system.

Prevention

Many of the problems caused by an unhealthy body structure can be corrected and more serious problems prevented by having your and your family's bodies checked on a periodic basis.

An ancient Chinese health saying is: "If people paid attention to their little health problems, they wouldn't have big health problems."

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