

Shoulder Arthritis

What Is Shoulder Arthritis?

Shoulder arthritis refers to the inflammation and degeneration of the shoulder joint, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility. Arthritis can affect any of the three bones that form the shoulder joint: the humerus (upper arm bone), scapula (shoulder blade), and clavicle (collarbone). The two most common types of arthritis that affect the shoulder joint are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms of shoulder arthritis may include:

- Persistent shoulder pain, particularly with movement or weight-bearing activities.
- Stiffness or limited range of motion in the shoulder joint.
- Swelling or inflammation around the shoulder.
- Crepitus or grinding sensations in the joint during movement.
- Weakness or instability in the shoulder.
- Difficulty performing overhead movements or reaching behind the back.
- Pain that worsens with changes in weather or activity level.

What Are The Causes?

Several factors can contribute to the development of shoulder arthritis, including:

- Age-related wear and tear: Osteoarthritis, the most common type of shoulder arthritis, occurs when the protective cartilage covering the ends of the bones wears down over time.
- Traumatic injuries: Previous shoulder injuries, fractures, dislocations, or repetitive stress on the joint can accelerate the degenerative changes associated with arthritis.
- Autoimmune disorders: Rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune conditions can cause inflammation and damage to the tissues of the shoulder joint.
- Genetics: Some individuals may have a genetic predisposition to developing arthritis, leading to early-onset or more severe symptoms.

What Are The Treatment Options?

Treatment options for shoulder arthritis may include:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or pain medications to alleviate pain and inflammation.
- Physical therapy or rehabilitation exercises to improve strength, flexibility, and range of motion of the shoulder joint.
- Corticosteroid injections or viscosupplementation therapy to provide temporary relief of symptoms.
- Activity modification and lifestyle changes to reduce stress on the shoulder joint.

- Assistive devices, such as braces, slings, or ergonomic tools, to support the shoulder and reduce strain during daily activities.
- Surgical interventions, such as shoulder arthroscopy, shoulder resurfacing, shoulder replacement (arthroplasty), or reverse shoulder replacement, may be recommended for severe cases of shoulder arthritis that do not respond to conservative treatments.