

Medial epicondylitis (golfers elbow)

Medial epicondylitis occurs at the bony prominence on the inside of the elbow where the tendons that flex your wrist originate. Medial epicondylitis can be caused by repetitive or overuse of the forearm muscles. It is a common injury amongst golfers and swimmers but can also occur in non-athletes who use hand tools in their profession or anyone who has repetitive use of the muscles that flex the wrist. Repetitive use of these muscles causes inflammation, which can lead to small tears in the tendon. As the injury becomes chronic, scar tissue begins to form and leads to tendonosis at the common flexor tendon.



SYMPTOMS:

Pain is felt on the inside of the elbow with gripping, bending the wrist, turning a doorknob or with sporting activities such as golf.

TREATMENT:

Treatment for this condition should start by seeing your physician or an orthopedic specialist. Conservative treatment initially consists of attempts to decrease stress and inflammation to the area. This is typically done with the use of icing, possibly a pressure relief brace below the elbow joint to decrease stresses to the common flexor tendon, activity modification to decrease use of the musculature that causes stress to this area. However, if the true cause of the injury is not identified and treated, the pain symptoms will continue to occur. If conservative treatment is not successful, your physician may prescribe physical therapy treatment. Physical therapy treatment may use different approaches and techniques to decrease inflammation and increase functional range of motion, such as modalities, soft tissue, and joint mobilizations. In addition, the therapist will evaluate your activities and biomechanics to possibly solve the cause behind, and solution to, the stresses in the tendon. Finally, the therapist may prescribe therapeutic activities to re-educate the damaged muscle tissue. This line of treatment may coincide with a corticosteroid injection by your physician to control the inflammation, but not as a cure to the problem.

If you would like more information about this issue, or need a physician referral in your area, please call us at 310-860-9720.