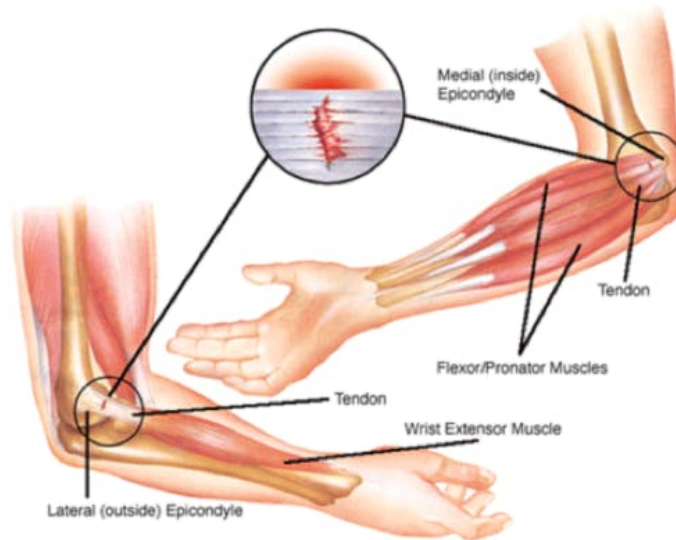


### Elbow Tendinopathy



#### ***What is elbow tendinopathy?***

Elbow tendinopathy is a term used to describe inflammation and/or tendon injury to the medial (inside) or lateral (outside) aspect of the elbow. Tendons connect muscle to bone. In this case, it is the muscles in the forearm, connecting to the epicondyles of the elbow. It is typically divided into **medial epicondylitis** or **lateral epicondylitis**. Pain located medially on the elbow is commonly referred to as golfer's elbow, or medial epicondylitis. While pain located laterally on the elbow is commonly referred to as tennis elbow, or lateral epicondylitis.

#### ***What causes elbow tendinopathy?***

Elbow tendinopathy is considered an overuse injury, meaning repetitive stress to the same area over time causes the tendon to become inflamed and injured resulting in multiple micro tears to the tendon.

- **Medial Epicondylitis** is an overuse injury to the common flexor tendon and is caused by repetitive movements that cause the wrist to flex up.
- **Lateral Epicondylitis** is an overuse injury to the common extensor tendon and is caused by repetitive movements that cause the wrist to extend down.

#### ***What are common symptoms of elbow tendinopathy?***

Common symptoms include a constant ache medially or laterally to the elbow. It can also be characterized as intermittent sharp pain with the aggregating activity, such as flexing or extending the wrist. Pain may radiate down the forearm. It can come on suddenly, or progressively worsen over time.

### ***What are my treatment options?***

There are several options to treat elbow tendinopathy. The best treatment course for you will be discussed with your clinician and is typically based off severity.

#### **- Anti-inflammatories**

Elbow tendinopathy is related to inflammation, so anti-inflammatories are a key part of treatment. There are several different options:

- Oral NSAIDs such as Naprosyn EC/Aleve, Mobic, Ibuprofen/ Advil/ Motrin
- Take continuously for 2 weeks. When taking these medications, be sure to take with food to avoid irritating your stomach lining. Additionally, you should not take multiple types of NSAIDs at once.
- Topical NSAIDs such as Voltaren Gel, Flector Patches
  - Flector Patch is an adhesive that contains anti-inflammatory medication which last for 12 hours and can be worn continuously.
  - Voltaren Gel also contains anti-inflammatory medication. It is applied and massaged into the affected area four times a day.
- Ice/ ice massage- very simple and very effective, especially after intense exercise.
  - For ice massage, fill paper Dixie cups with water and freeze. Peel back paper and now massage the area with the ice.

#### **- Braces and bands**

- Tendon trak
  - This is a band that you wear around the forearm close to the elbow. The band compresses the tendon and diminishes the stress of the tendon pulling off its insertion on the elbow.
  - Typically worn during aggravating activities
- Cock-up Wrist splint
  - This is a brace that forces the wrist into a neutral position. Immobilization of the wrist allows the tendon the rest and heal.
  - Can be worn at night, or day and night.

#### **- PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma) injections**

- Platelets circulate the body and are necessary for clotting, however, they also play a key role in the healing process. Injecting a concentrated portion of these healing platelets can speed up the healing process.
- PRP is an in office procedure and is created from your own blood. First, we draw your blood, then we spin it down, separate the platelets, and inject to affected area.
- PRP is not covered by insurance and costs \$1,000 per injection.
- See [PRP INJECTION](#) handout for more details

#### **- Physical Therapy and Home Exercises**

- Eccentric strengthening and stretching of the tendon
- Other physical therapy modalities such as iontophoresis and phonophoresis combine anti-inflammatories with ultrasound, which breaks up scar tissue and can contribute to healing.