Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Golfer's Elbow

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Golfer’s Elbow

Patient Information

Therapy Services

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Golfer’s Elbow

Golfer’s elbow is caused by alterations to the tendons on the inside of your elbow, leading to pain which can radiate down the forearm and affect tasks involving gripping or fine dexterous skills. This condition is also known as medial epicondylitis.

Cause

The exact cause of golfer’s elbow is unknown. However, we do know that it is often linked to repeated use of the tendons that bend and rotate the wrist. It can also develop secondary to another problem in the arm, such as an issue with a shoulder.

Symptoms

The first signs of golfer’s elbow are usually tenderness and pain on the inside of your elbow. Pain often occurs when you bend or turning your wrist or make a fist. Activities that involve lifting, gripping, pushing, pressing, or twisting the hand and wrist can make the pain worse. In some cases, the discomfort can spread down the forearm.

Management

Golfer’s elbow is a self-limiting condition, which means it will improve over time. You may choose not to have any specific treatment and allow it to settle on its own. However, because the pain can be quite limiting, there are treatment options that can help reduce your symptoms and may speed up your recovery.

First Line Treatment

- Analgesics / non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen (on the skin / oral)

- Physiotherapy, including advice on how to modify day to day activities

- Reassurance: this is a self-limiting condition, and most symptoms respond within three months

Injection Therapy

Current guidance is to avoid steroid injections for golfer's elbow. Research on similar tendon problems has shown that people may have a short-term improvement in symptoms but often experience worse long-term outcomes after having a steroid injection.

Alternative injection treatments include: Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP). PRP is made from your own blood. The plasma is then injected around the affected area to encourage healing. PRP injections can be considered an alternative treatment for golfer's elbow. However, because research into this condition is still limited, we cannot say with certainty which treatment works best. Patients offered PRP should be aware that evidence is still developing.

Surgery

Surgery is considered only as the last resort. It can be performed as an open procedure or using keyhole (arthroscopic) technique. At present, there is not enough high?quality research to show whether one type of surgery is better than the other, or how surgery compares with other treatment options for golfer's elbow. Because of this limited evidence, we cannot say for certain which treatment approach is most effective.

Physiotherapy Exercises

For advice on rehabilitation exercises, please visit the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy website and view their elbow exercise videos:

Video exercises for elbow pain | The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy



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