

SHOULDER STRESSORS

By Dr. Heath Schipp D.C.

Summer time is here and with summer comes swimming at the pools, children playing sports, working in the garden, pulling weeds, and cutting grass. All of the previous activities can cause shoulder pain for many people. The shoulder is a very complex joint that is commonly injured when people overexert themselves.

What causes shoulder pain?

The majority of the time the cause of shoulder pain is obvious. An individual lifts something that is heavy, kept the arm awkwardly in one place for too long, slept on the arm, or hurt it playing sports. The pain is felt either immediately or a day or two later. The pain that results is usually an ache or a sharp pain when the arm is moved. The majority of these cases are sprained muscles and ligaments and can be effectively treated by your chiropractor.

Car accidents are another common cause of shoulder pain. When a person is struck in a car accident the head and neck are slung forward and backward. This movement causes pinching on the nerves that go from the neck into the shoulders and arms. When pinched on, these nerves cause tingling in the arms and hands, sharp pain in the shoulders, and aching burning pain in the neck and shoulders. These types of injuries need to be evaluated immediately due to the chance of long term duration if not treated properly. Consult your chiropractor immediately to check for broken bones and pinched nerves after any auto accident.

Another type of shoulder pain is called “referred pain.” This pain occurs when another part of body sends a pain sensation somewhere else. An example of this occurs when a person who has heart attack feels pain in the left shoulder and down the left arm. The pain is felt in the shoulder but the problem is in the heart. “Trigger points” can send pain from the upper back into the shoulders.

What can be done about shoulder pain?

The most important thing to remember about shoulder pain is to seek help immediately. Your doctor of chiropractic will do testing to determine exactly what is causing the pain. It is extremely important to pinpoint the cause and begin the most appropriate treatment. Bracing, adjustments of the joint, and therapy will be done if it is a sprained or strained muscle. A referral to a specialist will be made for a fractured bone or a heart problem. Torn “rotator cuffs” and frozen shoulders will be rehabilitated so the patient can start using the arm again. Pinched nerves will be corrected with a light adjustment of the bone that is pinching it. The chiropractor will then help you modify your habits and lifestyle to protect and prevent you from reinjuring your shoulder and arms.

