

SHOULDER

Rotator Cuff Tear

The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles and tendons that help lift and rotate your arm. A rotator cuff tear happens when one or more of these tendons tear, which can occur due to injury, overuse, or age.

Symptoms

- Pain in the shoulder, especially at night
- Weakness in the arm
- Difficulty lifting the arm
- A feeling of popping or cracking with movement

How it's diagnosed

Your provider will ask about your symptoms and medical history, perform a physical exam to check shoulder movement and strength, and typically order imaging such as an MRI or ultrasound to confirm the tear.

Arthroscopic rotator cuff repair

Arthroscopy is a minimally invasive surgery in which small incisions are made and a tiny camera (arthroscope) is used to view and repair the shoulder joint. The surgeon inserts small instruments through the incisions and repairs the tear by suturing the tendon back in place. This technique typically results in less pain and a quicker recovery than traditional open surgery.

Recovery and rehab after surgery

- Rest and ice to reduce swelling in the first few days
- Physical therapy to regain strength and movement, working closely with a therapist
- A gradual return to activities — most patients return to normal activities within four to six months, though sports and heavy lifting may take longer

Key benefits of arthroscopic repair

- Faster recovery compared to traditional open surgery
- Less scarring, due to small incisions
- Lower risk of infection