

Calcific Tendinitis of the Shoulder (Degenerative Calcification)



Overview

This painful condition occurs when calcium deposits form in tendons of the rotator cuff. These tendons and surrounding tissues in the shoulder become inflamed. This condition typically affects adults.

Causes

The exact cause of degenerative calcification is not known. Physicians believe it is triggered by the wear and tear of aging. Over time, normal use of the shoulder can weaken and damage the tendons of the rotator cuff. As the fibers of these tendons attempt to heal, calcium crystals can be deposited in the tissue. The crystals collect to form large, painful deposits.

Symptoms

The most common symptom of this condition is moderate to severe shoulder pain. Patients often describe it as a burning sensation. The pain is usually caused by physical activity, especially by lifting the arm. The shoulder may also feel stiff and the range of movement may be limited.

Treatment

Treatment options may include anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroid injections, and physical therapy. In severe cases, surgery may be necessary to break up and remove the deposits.

