

Glenoid Labrum Tears

Anatomy

The shoulder joint has three bones: the shoulder blade (scapula), the collarbone (clavicle), and the upper arm bone (humerus).

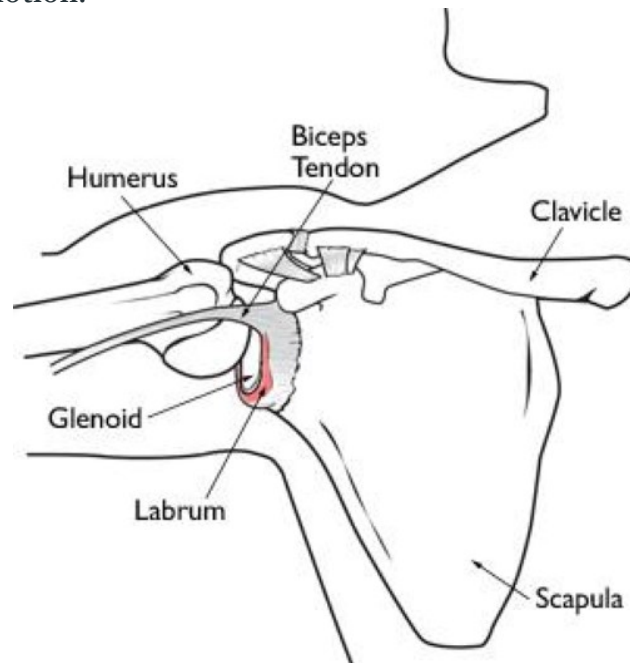
The head of the upper arm bone (humeral head) rests in a shallow socket in the shoulder blade called the glenoid. The head of the upper arm bone is usually much larger than the socket, and a soft fibrous tissue rim called the labrum surrounds the socket to help stabilize the joint. The rim deepens the socket by up to 50% so that the head of the upper arm bone fits better. In addition, it serves as an attachment site for several ligaments.

Anatomy

Injuries to the tissue rim surrounding the shoulder socket can occur from acute trauma or repetitive shoulder motion. Examples of traumatic injury include:

- Falling on an outstretched arm
- A direct blow to the shoulder
- A sudden pull, such as when trying to lift a heavy object
- A violent overhead reach, such as when trying to stop a fall or slide

Throwing athletes or weightlifters can experience glenoid labrum tears as a result of repetitive shoulder motion.



The labrum deepens the socket of the shoulder joint, making it a stronger fit for the head of the humerus.

Symptoms



The symptoms of a tear in the shoulder socket rim are very similar to those of other shoulder injuries. Symptoms include

- A sense of instability in the shoulder
- Shoulder dislocations
- Pain, usually with overhead activities
- Catching, locking, popping, or grinding
- Occasional night pain or pain with daily activities
- Decreased range of motion
- Loss of strength

Treatment

The goal of treatment is to reduce pain and restore function. The best treatment option is different for every person. Age, activity level, and general health are considerations made when determining treatment.

Nonsurgical Treatment

- Rest and activity modification.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication: ibuprofen and naproxen reduce pain and swelling.
- Strengthening exercises and physical therapy. Specific exercises will restore movement and strengthen your shoulder. Your exercise program will include stretches to improve flexibility and range of motion. Strengthening the muscles that support your shoulder can relieve pain and prevent further injury.

Surgical Treatment

Continued pain is the main indication for surgery. If you are very active and use your arms for overhead work or sports, your doctor may also suggest surgery.

If the tear extends into the biceps tendon or if the tendon is detached, the biceps tendon may be considered unstable. The surgeon will need to repair or transfer the tendon to a safer location using absorbable tacks, screws, or sutures.

