

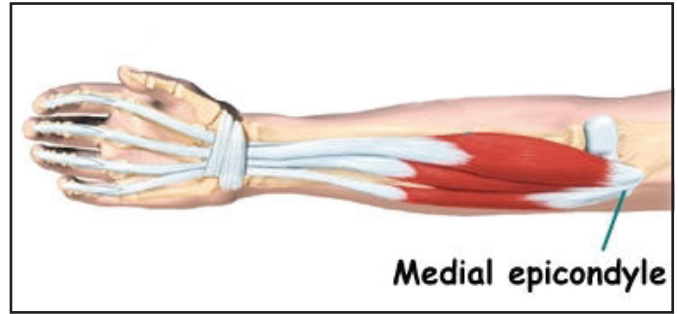
# Medial epicondylitis

## What is medial epicondylitis?

Medial epicondylitis is caused by repetitive stresses on the inside of the elbow. It can cause inflammation (swelling) and microfractures (small breaks) in the apophyseal cartilage (growth plate on the bone) and the surrounding structures.

## Who is at risk?

- Children/adolescents who participate in sports that require repetitive throwing or weight bearing with their arm(s), including baseball, softball, gymnastics, golf, etc.
- Most common in children/adolescents 10-13 years old.



## What are the symptoms?

- Point tenderness on the inside of the elbow.
- Pain with resisted wrist flexion (pulling palm to forearm) and/or pronation (turning palm down).
- Pain on the inside of the elbow when stresses are placed at this area.
- Swelling on the inside of the elbow.
- Might have an elbow flexion contracture (unable to straighten elbow completely).

## What are the treatment options?

### Conservative/non-surgical treatment:

- Rest from aggravating activities or relative rest.
- Ice the area for swelling/pain for 10 to 20 minutes, once an hour as needed.
- Muscle stretching to improve flexibility.
- Stretching should be done above and below elbow joint, before and after activity.
- Elbow tendon strap for compression may help.
- If the condition does not improve, a referral to physical therapy to address pain, swelling, range of motion, flexibility, strength, bracing/taping and sport training will usually improve symptoms.
- This is a self-limiting condition that usually resolves with time, muscle stretching and patience. It may require 10-24 months of a conservative treatment protocol for the symptoms to completely resolve. Once the growth plate stops growing and fuses to the underlying bone, the symptoms typically resolve.

### Surgical treatment:

- Internally fixation with a screw may help adolescents with recurrent symptoms.

## What is the time frame for return to activity/sport?

- Usually six to 12 weeks, but athlete will need to have a normal exam.
- Functional, painless range-of-motion must be present.

## What are the long-term side effects of having medial epicondylitis?

- Loss of range of motion, possibly contracture (inability to straighten arm).
- Decreased strength in arm/hand.