Elbow Tendonitis: Symptoms and Treatment

When tendons become inflamed, irritated or suffer microscopic tears, the condition is called tendonitis. Tendons are the tough and flexible bands of tissue that connect muscles to bones. Common types of tendonitis can show up in the knee, foot, elbow and shoulder. Some cases of tendonitis last just a few days, while others can lead to chronic pain.

What Causes Elbow Tendonitis?
There are a number of conditions that can affect the elbow area. Two of the most common types of elbow tendonitis are tennis elbow and golfer’s elbow. Elbow tendonitis can occur at either the medial (inside) or lateral (outside) aspect of the elbow. Any activity that requires forceful and repeated contraction of the arm muscles can cause elbow tendonitis.

Generally, people develop tendonitis if they frequently make the same motion while playing sports or at work. There are many activities that require repeated use of your elbow including: gardening, carpentry, lifting heavy objects, painting or recreational sports.

Symptoms of Elbow Tendonitis
There are many common types of elbow tendonitis symptoms. The most common is persistent pain right below the elbow joint on the outside of the upper forearm. Sometimes the pain can radiate all the way down the arm and even extend to their wrist.
- Sharp pain on the side of the elbow
- Often worse with activity or lifting
- May cause weakness associated with the pain
- Inability to carry objects or use the arm
- Elbow pain that occurs at night or while resting the arm
- Inability to straighten or flex the arm
- Swelling or bruising around the joint or the arm itself
- Pain when making a fist or pain when trying to grasp objects

Treatment for Elbow Tendonitis
Often times elbow tendonitis can heal on its own, but there are steps you can take to help with the healing process.
- Ice your elbow
- Give your elbow a break, using an elbow strap may help
- Take ibuprofen or aspirin to help with swelling and pain
- Physical therapy can help with range of motion and strengthen the muscles in this area

If you are suffering from elbow tendonitis symptoms, take measures to ensure they don’t get worse and call your doctor today. Schedule an appointment today with one of our experienced orthopedic surgeons.