



Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

## Shoulder Separation Treatment

### Self-Care at Home

Like other problems with bones and joints, the first priority is to prevent further harm and ease the pain by immobilizing the joint and applying ice.

- Shoulder slings are perfect for immobilization.
- The application of ice helps decrease the swelling to the area. This, in turn, decreases pain and expedites recovery.
  - An effective home ice pack can be made by filling a large storage-size zip-lock bag with crushed ice. Drop the closed bag into a pillowcase and apply directly to the top of the shoulder.
  - The ice pack should be removed when the skin is completely numb or if you sense a burning or pins-and-needles feeling. After allowing the skin to rewarm for 10-15 minutes, the ice may be reapplied.
  - Ice should be used for the first 12 hours of most shoulder separations.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) or similar medications can be given for pain and swelling.

### Medical Treatment

- Ice is an important treatment of most acute soft tissue injuries.
- Frequently, a sling is needed and helpful for the first few days after an injury. This helps to support the weight of the arm and to restrict motion. It is usually advised, however, to begin some motion exercises within a few days once the immediate pain has stopped.
- Pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications may be advised, either over-the-counter or by prescription.
- You may require physical therapy, particularly once the immediate pain has stopped within a few days. The decision for this often is made during a follow-up visit.
- Complete ligament rupture at the AC joint may require surgical repair by an orthopedist (a specialist in muscles and bones).

## more information from eMedicineHealth

- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
- [Exams and Tests](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Outlook](#)

For more information, read the complete article, Shoulder Separation (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59391>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

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Reviewed by Cynthia Haines, MD on May 24, 2006

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