



SLAP tears



Background

The labrum is a ring of tissue that deepens the socket (glenoid) of the shoulder and provides a site of attachment of the long head of biceps tendon. It helps with stability of the shoulder and if torn can be a source of pain and irritation.

SLAP stands for Superior Labrum Anterior to Posterior. A SLAP tear is a tear of the labrum at the top that goes from the front to the back of the glenoid of the shoulder.



Causes

A tear can occur from a specific injury or through the repetitive use of the shoulder, for example in overhead athletes.

Symptoms

Symptoms can vary from one person to the next. People may report pain, particularly with overarm movements such as throwing. There may also be a clicking, catching, grinding, or granching in the shoulder. Sometimes people report a feeling of looseness or instability within the shoulder and something not quite right that is deep within the shoulder.

Treatment - non-surgical

While the SLAP tears themselves are unlikely to heal, symptoms associated with them may settle with time and physiotherapy.

Treatment - surgical

In some cases surgery is required to smooth the torn area, or to stabilise or release the long head of biceps tendon to reduce the stresses on the labrum, or to stabilise the labrum itself.

Physiotherapy / rehabilitation after surgery

After your surgery you will be given a sling. How long you need to wear it and what exercises you need to do will depend on the particular procedures that you had during your surgery. This will be explained to you. The physiotherapists will tailor your rehabilitation accordingly.

Outcome

Generally people have a good result after this type of surgery, however it depends on what was found during the operation and what needed to be done.