



HOCKEY SHOULDER INJURIES

By: Marty Cummings DPT, CMPT

Introduction

With the nature of hockey being a contact sport injuries unfortunately are part of the game. Hockey players are known for their toughness but sometimes differentiating between pain and an injury can be difficult. My goal is to give you and your athlete information on common hockey injuries, how to identify them, and how to prevent them.

The Shoulder

According to a study which tracked high school ice hockey injuries in the US from 2008-2013 shoulder injuries were the second most common. The most common mechanisms of a shoulder injury are from checking or getting checked and falling on the ice.

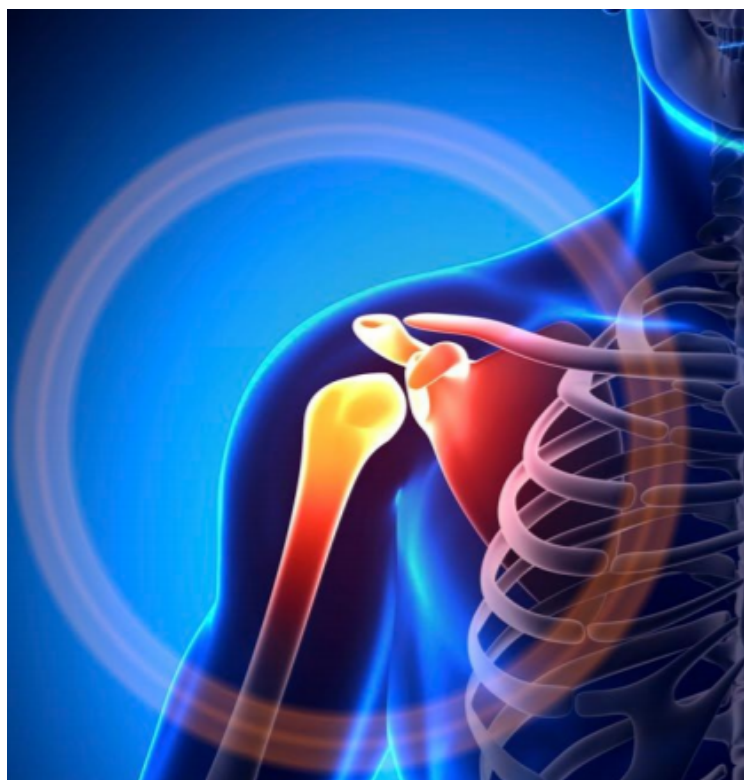
Common Shoulder Injuries

AC Joint Separation

- Most common shoulder injury in hockey
- Pain at the end of the collarbone
- Step deformity may be present
- 3 different grades of severity
- Pain moving shoulder above shoulder height
- Swelling often occurs

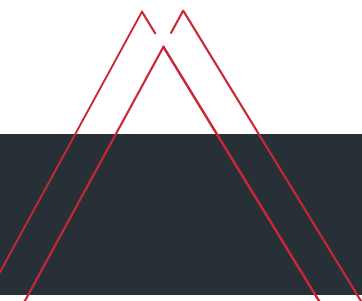
Clavicle (collarbone fracture)

- Pain, swelling, tenderness along collarbone
- Pain with shoulder movement
- Abnormal bump along collarbone
- Bruising or abrasions along the collarbone



Shoulder Dislocation

- Pain and weakness
- Numbness, tingling, or weakness in arm, hand, or fingers
- Shoulder visibly "out of place"
- Immobility of the arm, or severe difficulty moving it



Identifying a Shoulder Injury vs. Pain

Different shoulder injuries will cause a wide variety of pain which will differ from athlete to athlete. Here are some common questions to ask if you believe a shoulder injury occurred:

- Can you move your arm normally or is it stiff/painful?
- Do you feel like your shoulder is unstable, may pop out of the socket?
- Is your shoulder strong enough to perform normal activities at home or at practice?

An acute injury, less than 1 week, may give a false positive but below are 5 signs you may need to see a doctor.

Signs Your Athlete May Need to See a Doctor

- The shoulder joint looks deformed
- They can't use their shoulder at all
- The pain is very intense
- Swelling in the shoulder occurs suddenly
- Their arm or hand is weak or numb



Next Time: How to Bulletproof Your Shoulders to Prevent Injuries

Look for some of our additional articles concerning common ice hockey injuries, how to identify them, how to prevent them with proper warm ups and exercises, and steps to return to playing hockey after and injury.

Check out all of our resources on our website www.performancerehabkc.com
Also follow us on Facebook and Instagram for more videos and articles.

If you are worried your athlete is injured please consult your physician

References:

George T. Matic, Mark F. Sommerfeldt, Thomas M. Best, Christy L. Collins, R. Dawn Comstock & David C. Flanigan (2015) Ice hockey injuries among United States high school athletes from 2008/2009–2012/2013, The Physician and Sportsmedicine, 43:2, 119-125

Innes J. Common hockey injuries: explanation, treatment and prevention. Sporting News. <https://www.sportingnews.com/us/nhl/news/common-hockey-injuries-nhl-ncaa-iihf-acl-tear-shoulder-ac-separation/159er93g8vpn31rfl15ioe9m5l>. Published August 26, 2014. Accessed December 15, 2020.