



360 Notre Dame St. Box 89 Belle River ON N0R 1A0  
Phone (519) 728-3366 Fax (519) 728-2646  
info@activelivingchiro.ca www.activelivingchiro.ca

**Frozen Shoulder Syndrome**  
**By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil**

Dear Dr. Steve: I recently woke up and was unable to move my shoulder. It was very sore at first, with sharp pains. The pain went away after a couple of days, but I am still unable to lift my arm to the side or front. It is making it very hard to perform even the most basic daily chores. The worst part is, I don't even know how I hurt it. What's going on with my shoulder and can anything be done about it? D.M. Belle River

Dr. Steve: It sounds like you are describing Adhesive Capsulitis. This is more commonly called frozen shoulder. There are a few syndromes that share the symptoms you are complaining of, however, the fact that it came on so quick and you can't recall any trauma leads me to believe it is frozen shoulder.

Frozen shoulder syndrome usually presents rapidly into the acute phase and can onset with or without trauma. It is usually caused by an inflammatory problem within the shoulder that heals with fibrosis or scar tissue. This scar tissue is produced by the body to stabilize the joint. However, when this fibrosis progresses into the joint space, it restricts mobility and causes severe pain with motion. The shoulder will then progress to the stiffening phase where most of the pain disappears but the joint becomes progressively less mobile. This can last months or years and progresses to a thawing phase where some of the range of motion returns, but the shoulder remains stiff and restricted. Treatment for frozen shoulder includes both passive and active range of motion exercises. Anti-inflammatory medications are used in the acute phase along with ice therapy to reduce inflammation. Returning proper motion to the joint as quickly as possible will reduce the duration of symptoms and speed recovery.

Some individuals are predisposed to adhesive capsulitis such as those with diabetes, hyperthyroidism, chronic lung disorders and those who have had a heart attack. Most patients are over 40 years of age and have suffered some sort of past trauma to the affected shoulder.

The problem with your shoulder should be examined and diagnosed by your medical doctor or chiropractor. If your problem turns out to be frozen shoulder, therapy should begin as soon as possible to prevent long term or permanent damage.