

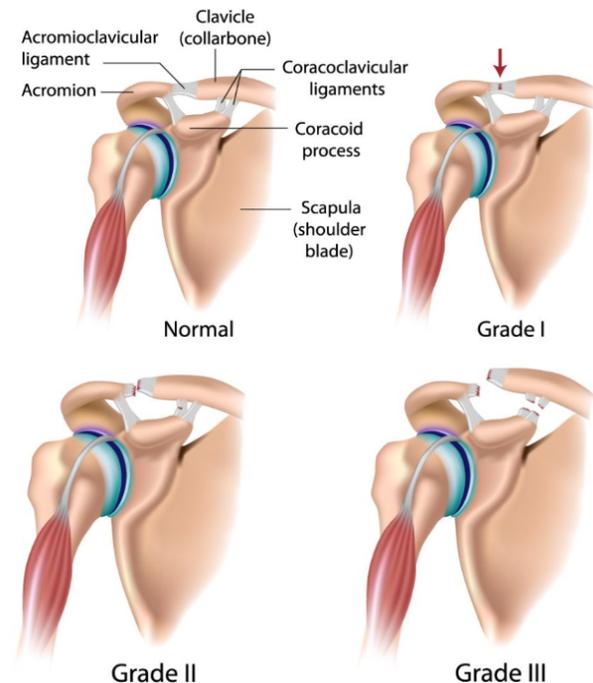
# YOUR GROUP23

## PATIENT HEALTH JOURNEY

### BECOME AN EXPERT: Shoulder Separation/AC Joint Sprain

**Shoulder separations**, also known as **acromioclavicular (AC) joint sprains**, are a common injury that affects the shoulder. The AC joint is the connection point between the clavicle (collarbone) and the acromion, which is part of the scapula (shoulder blade). Shoulder separations occur when the ligaments that support the AC joint are stretched or torn, leading to pain, swelling, and difficulty moving the arm.

Shoulder separations are typically classified into different grades based on the severity of the injury. The two primary ligaments involved in an AC joint injury are the **acromioclavicular ligament (AC ligament)** and the **coracoclavicular ligament (CC ligament)**.



**Grade 1** AC joint sprains involve a mild stretching or slight tearing of the AC ligament. The CC ligament remains intact. This type of sprain is characterized by minimal joint instability and mild pain. **Grade 2** AC joint sprains involve a partial tearing of the AC ligament, resulting in moderate joint instability. In addition to AC ligament damage, there may also be some disruption or stretching of the CC ligament. This leads to increased separation between the acromion and the clavicle. **Grade 3** AC joint sprains represent a more severe form of injury, involving a complete rupture of both the AC and CC ligaments. This leads to significant joint instability and marked separation between the acromion and clavicle. In some cases, additional grades (e.g., 4, 5, 6) are used to describe more severe or complex AC joint injuries.

Shoulder separations can be caused by a variety of factors, including sports injuries, falls, and car accidents. Athletes who participate in contact sports, such as football or hockey, are at a higher risk for shoulder separations. Additionally, individuals who perform repetitive overhead motions, such as painters or weightlifters, are also at a higher risk for this injury.

**Symptoms** of a shoulder separation include pain at the AC joint, swelling, and difficulty moving the arm. In more severe cases, the clavicle may appear visibly displaced, causing a bump or deformity at the shoulder.

Treatment for a shoulder separation depends on the severity of the injury. In mild cases, rest, ice, and pain medications may be sufficient to manage symptoms. Physical therapy may also be recommended to improve range of motion and strengthen the muscles surrounding the shoulder joint.

# BECOME AN EXPERT cont'd

For more severe cases, a sling or brace may be necessary to immobilize the arm and allow the ligaments to heal. In some cases, surgery may be required to repair the damaged ligaments and restore stability to the AC joint.

Recovery time for a shoulder separation can vary depending on the severity of the injury and the chosen treatment plan. In mild cases, recovery may take only a few weeks, while more severe cases may require several months of rest and rehabilitation.

## Why does this matter?

At Group23, we often see patients frustrated with their symptoms, lack of improvement, and the cost of ineffective treatments, products, and devices. Often the biggest issue we see with a diagnosis is the patient's lack of knowledge of the subject because no one has taken the time to explain what is truly happening! It's not enough to just know the words shoulder separation; it's important to us that you understand what it means!

Now that you know more about shoulder separations, we can address treatment options that support strengthening your muscles and restoring joint range of motion.

No matter where you start, you can get to the point of less pain and improved functionality... **IF** you create SMART goals, utilize the options in your Toolkit, and commit to working proactively with your Group23 Health Journey team!

## Our care philosophy

We see treatment choices as a Patient Health Journey, and we take pride in being on this Journey with you the entire way. The most crucial part is becoming an expert and creating Rise Above goals specific to you and your lifestyle. Once your Group23 healthcare team understands your destination, we can accurately create a treatment plan that is fit for you!



Check out a free lifestyle assessment, available with the Health & Wellness team!



Surgery is a possibility, but a last resort option in the case of shoulder separations. We have a whole Toolkit of other options to try first!



Becoming an expert and setting a SMART goal ensures every treatment decision reflects your priorities, not ours!



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