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Tennis Elbow

Description:

This is a painful condition of the elbow joint, usually made worse by activity, such as lifting and carrying items, and often it is made worse by repetitive movements. The pain is caused by inflammation within the tendons, where they attach to the bone at the elbow, and due to continue use, this inflammation fails to settle down between episodes and may become a long-standing or chronic condition. The diagnosis is usually a clinical one that your surgeon can diagnose in the clinic.

Treatment:

The treatment is usually non-surgical and is made up of a combination of physiotherapy, deep-friction massage, stretching, exercises and injections.

The vast majority of patients will recover with the above treatment measures; however, a small proportion may come to require an operation. The surgery is usually done under general anaesthetic in an operating theatre and can be done as a day case procedure. After the surgery, a bulky bandage is applied to the arm and heavy lifting and carrying is avoided for 6 weeks to allow tendons to heal fully. The bandage is usually removed between 1 and 2 weeks after the surgery, so that the elbow can be full mobilised to avoid stiffness.

Complications:

Of those who have been resistant to non-surgical treatments, approximately 80% will have benefit from surgery, but there are a few cases where even surgery will not alleviate the symptoms fully.

Complications are uncommon, but wound infections and failure of complete resolution of the symptoms are a possibility.

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