

Mayo Clinic Minute: How a new rotator cuff balloon procedure helps some patients get better

Video	Audio
<p>Joaquin Sanchez-Sotelo, M.D., Ph.D. Orthopedic Surgery Mayo Clinic</p>	<p>"When there is a tear of the rotator cuff, in many individuals, it is possible to do a primary repair of the tendons. However, in some individuals, there is such extensive damage to the tendons that the tendons cannot be fixed primarily."</p>
	<p>That condition is called an irreparable rotator cuff tear, and while there are operations to fix it, they can be pretty invasive. However, for some of these patients, a new less-invasive balloon procedure could be the answer.</p>
<p>Video courtesy: Stryker</p>	<p>"This procedure basically tries to place a temporary spacer between the humeral head and the rest of the scapula. In a normal shoulder, when the rotator cuff is intact, the head of the humerus remains centered on the socket. When the tendons are torn, what happens is that the humeral head will migrate up and then the bones contact abnormally. And we think that that contact becomes painful. Also, the joint is now 'out of socket,' and then the other remaining muscles cannot really work really well."</p>
	<p>"We place an inflatable device that occupies the space where the rotator cuff tendons are supposed to be. The humeral head is now prevented from contacting with the acromion and also because the head remains more centered, it is easier for patients to do rehabilitation and retrain the muscles that are still intact to maintain a healthy and functional joint."</p>
	<p>The saline-filled balloon eventually dissolves in the body in about a year. The benefits are that the operation can be done through a minimally invasive technique and recovery is fast.</p>
	<p>"For the right patient, I think it's possible that could be a game-changer in the treatment of this condition."</p>
	<p>For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.</p>

