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Restoring Function. Maximizing Performance.
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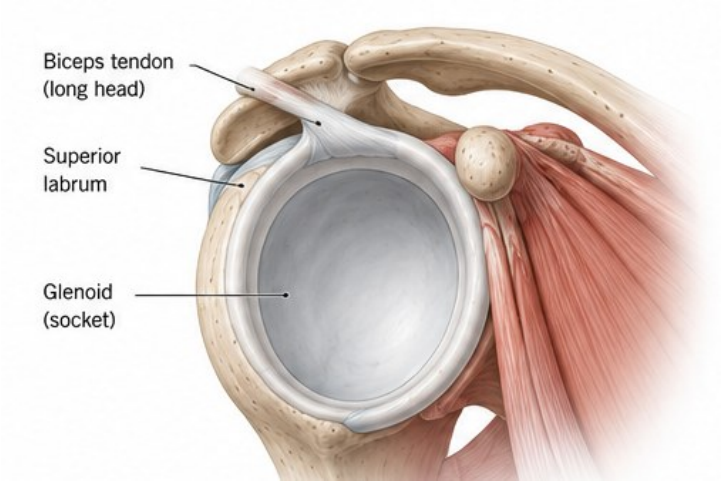
SHOULDER CONDITION

SLAP Tear

Superior Labrum Anterior-Posterior Tear — Patient Condition Guide



The superior labrum and biceps anchor — for education; your anatomy may differ

OVERVIEW

A SLAP tear is a tear of the superior (top) part of the labrum — the rim of cartilage that deepens the shoulder socket — at the point where the biceps tendon anchors. SLAP stands for Superior Labrum Anterior to Posterior. It is common in overhead and throwing athletes, after a fall on an outstretched arm, or from repetitive overhead use, and can also develop with age.

ANATOMY

The labrum is a ring of cartilage around the shoulder socket (glenoid) that deepens it and helps keep the ball centered. The superior labrum is where the long head of the biceps tendon attaches. A SLAP tear disrupts this biceps anchor, which is why symptoms often involve both the shoulder and the biceps.

SYMPTOMS

- Deep shoulder pain, often with overhead or throwing motions
- A catching, locking, or popping sensation
- Loss of throwing velocity or 'dead arm' in athletes
- Pain with lifting or reaching overhead
- A sense of weakness or instability

DIAGNOSIS

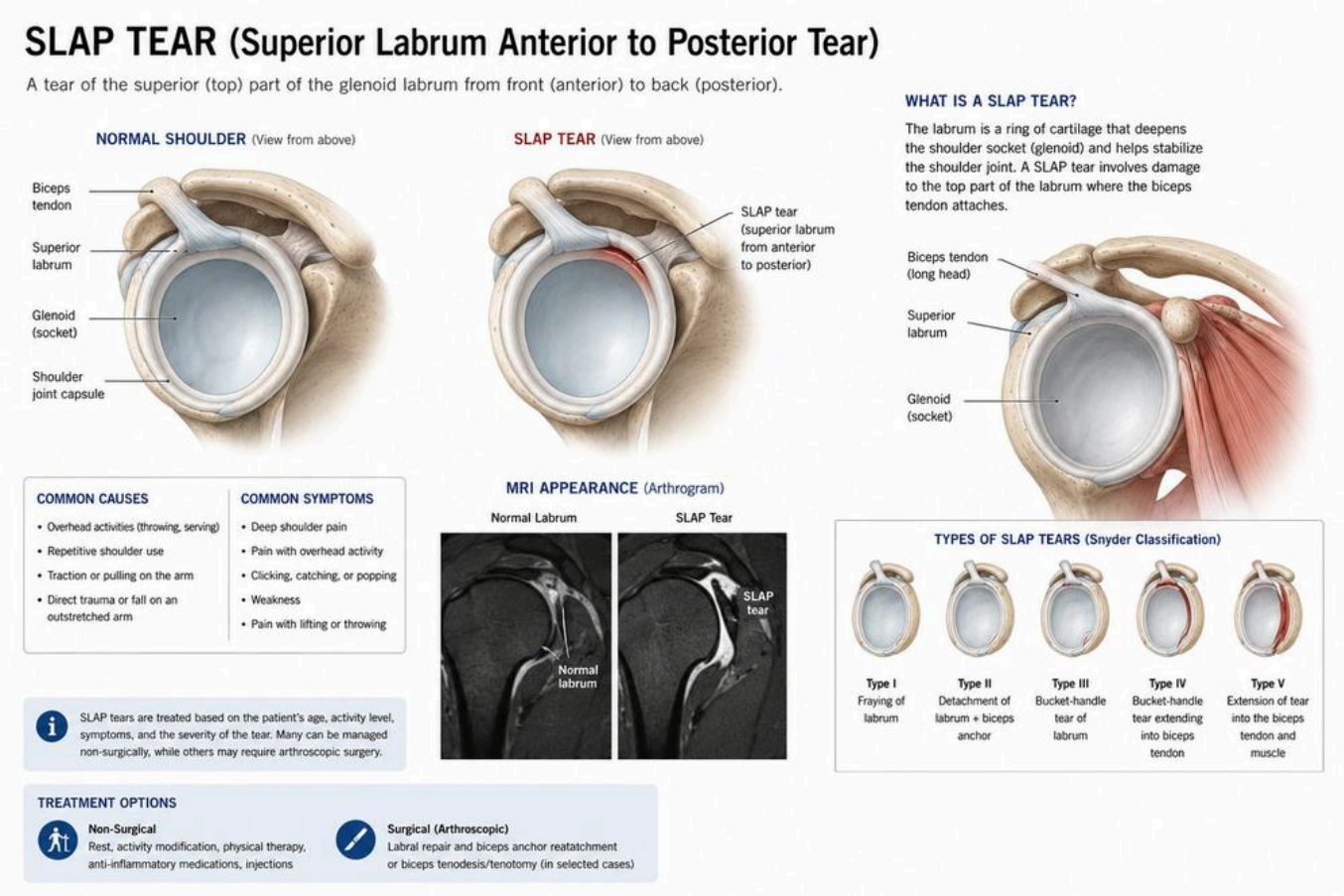
Dr. Pettit uses specific provocative tests (such as the O'Brien active-compression test) along with your history. Because the labrum is hard to see on plain images, an MRI — often with contrast dye injected into the joint (MR arthrogram) — is the best test to confirm a SLAP tear.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Many SLAP tears improve with physical therapy focused on the rotator cuff and shoulder-blade mechanics, activity modification, and anti-inflammatory measures. When symptoms persist, arthroscopic options include SLAP repair (reattaching the labrum) or a biceps tenodesis (moving the biceps anchor), chosen based on your age, activity, and tear pattern.

RECOVERY OUTLOOK

After surgery you will wear a sling for a period, followed by staged physical therapy to restore motion and then strength. Return to overhead sport is typically around 4–6 months and is guided by strength and function.



SLAP tear — superior labrum injury at the biceps anchor · for education; your anatomy may differ

SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE

robertpettitmd.com/handouts/slap-tear.pdf

This handout is for general patient education and does not replace personalized medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given by Dr. Pettit and your care team.