TENDINITIS - MANAGING THE SYMPTOMS AND PROMOTING HEALING

Acute tendinitis occurs when a tendon is injured and develops pain and inflammation. It typically happens from a forceful pull on the tendon (ex. Ankle strain) or from repetitive use (ex. Trimming bushes). Tendons have low blood flow, so they have a hard time getting the nutrients they need to heal and can take up to 3 months to fully heal. Unfortunately, the low blood flow can frequently lead to a chronic tendinosis, in which the tendon is no longer inflamed but the fibers in it degenerate and weaken, leading to chronic pain and weakness due to partial or complete tears.

1. Diet & Supplements: They are the natural way of decreasing pain and inflammation
    a. *Anti-inflammatory Diet* (ex. Dr Andrew Weil's diet)
        i. Eat whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains and nuts, lean meats (Ex. Fish, turkey, etc.)
        ii. Avoid processed carbohydrates, white bread, sugar, sodas, saturated fat, and fried foods
    b. *Herbs and spices* (ex. Turmeric, Bromelain, garlic, cherry tart, etc. per bottle directions)
2. Physical Therapy (PT): "Movement is medicine". Tendons heal when the muscle associated to it gets stronger. PT will help you restore your strength, decrease inflammation and transition to a home program.
    a. *Range of motion* – Restore proper biomechanics to promote healing and prevent re-injury.
    b. *Strength & conditioning* – Promotes healing of the tendon. Prevents re-injury.
    c. *Anti-inflammatory therapeutic modalities* – Complementary to the medications and supplements
3. Medications: The goal is to use the minimum required dose for decreasing pain and inflammation
    a. *Acetaminophen* (per bottle directions) For pain only
    b. *Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID)* Decrease pain and inflammation
        i. Over the counter (ex. Advil, Aleve) – For mild tendinitis
        ii. Prescription (ex. Diclofenac, Meloxicam, Ibuprofen) For moderate to severe injuries. Come in oral and topical options. You have to finish the full prescription to obtain the best results.
4. Braces: Used temporarily for severe cases to offload the tendon in order to let it rest and heal
    a. Ex. Ankle brace, boot, wrist brace, elbow strap, chopat strap, etc.
    b. Prolonged used will further weaken the muscle and tendon and delay the recovery
    c. May be recommended after injections or surgery
5. Injections: Recommended when the above treatments fail to provide significant relief
    a. *Cortisone* (i.e. steroid) Help to quickly decrease the pain and inflammation. Usually takes 3 days to work. However, too many cortisone injections may weaken the tendon.
    b. *Prolotherapy* – An alternative option to decrease pain without the detrimental side effects of cortisone
    c. *Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)* – Nutrients and growth factors that stimulate the healing of the tendon are harvested from your blood and injected directly into the tendon; recommended for chronic tendinosis
    d. Bone marrow aspirate – Similar to PRP with a much higher healing potential
6. Surgery
    a. *Percutaneous tenotomy* - Minimally invasive procedure done in clinic or in the operating room under sedation to remove inflammation and promote the healing process. No incision. (ex. Topaz)
    b. *Open tenotomy* - Done in the operating room under general anesthesia. Tendon is debrided manually using a scalpel to remove inflammation and promote healing. Requires an incision.