

Brachial Plexitis

Brachial Plexitis is also known as Brachial Neuritis and Brachial Neuropathy and Brachial Plexopathy to name a few.

Brachial Plexitis occurs when the network of nerves that send signals to your shoulder, arm and hand, become inflamed causing sudden severe pain.

Injury may occur during contact sports such as football or wrestling where the brachial nerves get stretched or compressed. The brachial plexus can also be inflamed by unknown causes. More severe injuries can occur with car or motorcycle accidents. In severe cases the brachial plexus injury, the nerve root can be torn from the spinal cord.

Usually one arm is affected. Pain is usually like an electric shock, shooting down the arm associated weakness and/or numbness. Other symptoms can include, loss of feeling and muscle atrophy. Symptoms may last a few minutes or may continue for few days or longer.

Symptoms depend greatly on severity, location as well as initiating causes of the injury. In most cases, brachial injury will heal with no permanent symptoms. Depending on the cause, some injuries can cause permanent disability.

Diagnosis is made after a thorough patient history, physical examination and investigation such as MRI and EMG (nerve study) and blood tests. EMG is the diagnostic tool of choice and may show changes when other investigations are negative. MRI is performed to rule out other causes.

Treatment is decided after diagnosis is made.

IVIg or immunoglobulin is useful for inflammatory conditions.

Medication for pain may be used for control of pain while recovery is occurring.