

Difference Between Tenosynovitis and Tendonitis

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Key Difference - Tenosynovitis vs Tendonitis

Tenosynovitis is the [inflammation](#) of a [tendon](#) along with its sheath whereas any inflammation or irritation of a tendon can be defined as tendonitis. As their definitions clearly state, **in tenosynovitis both tendon and its sheath are inflamed but in tendonitis only the tendon is inflamed.** This can be considered as the **key difference** between these two conditions.

What is Tenosynovitis?

Tenosynovitis is the inflammation of a tendon along with its sheath.

Causes

- [Infection](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- Trauma
- Different forms of [arthritis](#)
- Wear and tear injuries

Clinical Features

Tenosynovitis commonly occurs in the hands.

- [Edema](#)
- Erythema
- Pain
- Dermatitis of the affected region
- Fever
- Signs and symptoms of different variants of arthritis should be sought when tenosynovitis is suspected.

Diagnosis

When there is a clinical suspicion of tenosynovitis, following investigations are carried out to confirm the diagnosis.

- Synovial fluid aspirates are sent for microbiological studies to identify the infectious agents and their sensitivity to antimicrobial agents
- Hematological studies such as CRP, ESR and rheumatoid factor
- [X-rays](#) and other radiological investigations



Figure 01: Tenosynovitis

Management

In case of infectious tenosynovitis, antibiotics have to be given via the intravenous route. The affected limbs should be elevated until the infection is under control.

In the management of inflammatory tenosynovitis, anti-inflammatory agents such as oral [corticosteroids](#) can be given to control the inflammation. Massaging the affected region with ice can be helpful in relieving the pain.

What is Tendonitis?

A tendon is a thick fibrous cord that attaches muscles to bone. Any inflammation or irritation of a tendon can be defined as tendonitis. A pain and tenderness just outside a joint are usually caused by this condition. Tendonitis most commonly affects the tendons around the shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees, and heels. Tennis elbow, Pitcher's shoulder, Swimmer's shoulder, Golfer's elbow and Jumper's knee are some of the common names used to describe tendonitis occurring at different sites.

Tendonitis is much more likely to occur from the repetition of a particular movement over time. It can be triggered by a sudden injury. A majority of the people develop

tendonitis as an occupational hazard where repetitive movements exert an undue stress on the tendons.

Risk Factors

- Age
- Occupations involving repetitive motions, awkward position. Frequent overhead reaching, vibration, and forceful exertion
- Sports

Clinical Features

- Dull ache on moving the affected limb or joint
- Tenderness
- Mild swelling

If your signs and symptoms interfere with day-to-day activities for more than a few days, seek medical advice.

Investigations and Diagnosis

Diagnosis predominantly depends on the physical examination. An X-ray may be needed to exclude the other conditions giving rise to the same signs and symptoms.



Figure 02: Tendonitis

Management

Management of tendonitis aims at relieving the pain and reducing the inflammation. The pain associated with tendonitis can be alleviated by using analgesics and corticosteroids. Platelet-rich plasma injection has been observed to be beneficial. The affected muscle-tendon unit can be strengthened by doing the specific exercises regularly. Recovery from tendonitis can be expedited by rest, ice, compression, and elevation.

What are the Similarities Between Tenosynovitis and Tendonitis?

- Both conditions are due to inflammatory changes taking place in the musculoskeletal system.
- Investigations carried out and management of both tendonitis and tenosynovitis are the same.

What is the Difference Between Tenosynovitis and Tendonitis?

Tenosynovitis vs Tendonitis	
Tenosynovitis is the inflammation of a tendon along with its sheath.	Any inflammation or irritation of a tendon can be defined as tendonitis.
Clinical Features	
Both tendon and its sheath are inflamed.	Only the tendon is inflamed.

Summary - Tenosynovitis vs Tendonitis

Tenosynovitis is the inflammation of a tendon along with its sheath. On the other hand, any inflammation or irritation of a tendon can be defined as tendonitis. The difference between the two disorders is that in tenosynovitis, both tendon and its overlying sheath are inflamed but in tendonitis, only the tendon is inflamed.

Reference:

1.Kumar, Parveen J., and Michael L. Clark. Kumar & Clark clinical medicine. Edinburgh: W.B. Saunders, 2009.

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