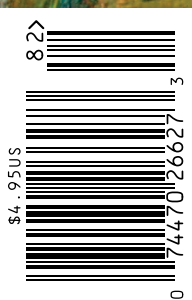


UPPER MAKEFIELD FARMHOUSE • OUR RIVER TOWNS

# Bucks County

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**HEALTHY LIVING GUIDE / ENDANGERED SPECIES**  
**BUCKS COUNTY SWEET CORN / PRIVATE SCHOOLS**  
**BRAIN CANCER BATTLE / LAYERED GARDENS**



## What is Tendinitis?

**O**ur hands are unique. Much of what we do every day—open bottles, hold utensils, dress ourselves—relies on the function of specialized structures in our hands called tendons. Tendons connect muscles to bones, and enable us to move our fingers, wrists, elbows and shoulders. When tendons become irritated, we experience pain, swelling and difficulty using the affected area—this is called tendinitis.

Tendinitis is extremely common and can affect the fingers ('trigger finger'), wrists, elbows ('tennis elbow' or 'golfer's elbow') and the shoulder ('rotator cuff tendinitis').

What causes tendinitis? Interestingly, tendon irritation increases as we age, as well as when we do repetitive activities including typing, gardening, sports and heavy lifting.

Who gets tendinitis? People of all ages can get tendinitis. Usually, when young people experience tendon irritation it is in response to an overuse-type activity, such as sports involving throwing or lifting. In older people, tendinitis can occur out of the blue, and can be quite unnerving.

How do we recognize tendinitis? Most people with irritated tendons will feel pain, notice swelling and have difficulty performing their daily activities. For instance, fingers may lock during



grip, they may feel pain at the wrist when preparing meals, and may have difficulty throwing a ball. Things that once were easily done, may become difficult and painful.

How do we treat tendinitis? Rest, ice, and anti-inflammatory pain medicine are usually the first course of treatment. Often, mild tendon irritation will improve in a few days. However, if pain and difficulty performing daily activi-

ties continues, it is best to visit a hand specialist for an evaluation. In my office when I suspect tendinitis, I examine the pain, swelling, stiffness and weakness of the affected area. I often recommend a brace and anti-inflammatory medication to start, and if the pain persists, occasionally a steroid injection will do the trick. If the pain continues, surgery—when indicated—can also provide relief.

Rowena McBeath, M.D., Ph.D. is a board-certified, fellowship-trained hand surgeon with the renowned Philadelphia Hand to Shoulder Center. Dr. McBeath is a member of the Medical Staff of St. Mary Medical Center and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, where she is Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery. To schedule an appointment with Dr. McBeath, call 1-800-385-PHSC or visit [hand2shouldercenter.com](http://hand2shouldercenter.com).