

Can a Car Accident Cause a SLAP Tear?

Our Houston attorneys can help you secure fair compensation after a crash-related shoulder injury

The sudden jolt of a car crash can lead to more than just whiplash or broken bones. One less known but potentially debilitating injury is a SLAP tear. This shoulder injury can significantly impact your quality of life after a collision.

If you developed a crash-related SLAP tear in Texas, it's important to understand your legal right to compensation and how to pursue a successful claim. An experienced Houston [car accident lawyer](#) at Smith & Hassler can help you every step of the way.

What is a SLAP tear?

SLAP stands for Superior Labrum Anterior and Posterior. It refers to an injury to the ring of cartilage called the labrum, which surrounds the socket of the shoulder joint. This cartilage helps keep the ball of the upper arm bone securely in the shoulder socket.

A SLAP tear specifically affects the top part of the labrum, where the biceps tendon attaches. This area takes a lot of stress during certain arm movements, which makes it particularly vulnerable to damage.

Symptoms of a SLAP tear can include a deep ache in the shoulder, pain with certain arm movements, a feeling of instability in the shoulder, and a loss of shoulder strength. These symptoms can interfere with daily activities, from reaching for a cup in a high cabinet to performing job duties.

How can car accidents cause SLAP tears?

SLAP tears are often associated with repetitive overhead motions, often due to physical labor or sports. However, they can also result from the sudden trauma during a car accident.

The impact from a collision can drive the upper arm bone into the shoulder socket. This can cause the labrum to tear, especially if the arm is outstretched at the moment of impact, such as when bracing against a steering wheel or dashboard.

The violent motion of a crash can also cause the shoulder to dislocate momentarily and then snap back into place, which could tear the labrum in the process.

Which types of car accidents are most likely to cause SLAP tears?

While any car accident can potentially cause a SLAP tear, certain types of collisions pose a higher risk. The ones that particularly stand out include:

- **Side-impact collisions:** When a car is hit from the side, the driver or passenger on the impact side may instinctively brace themselves. This puts their shoulder in a vulnerable position.
- **Rollover accidents:** As a vehicle rolls, occupants may be tossed around. This can subject their shoulders to extreme forces from multiple angles.
- **Rear-end collisions:** The sudden forward thrust can cause a driver's arms to jerk forward while still gripping the steering wheel, which can potentially lead to a SLAP tear.

How are SLAP tears diagnosed after a car accident?

Diagnosing a SLAP tear after a car accident requires prompt medical attention. However, this injury might not be immediately apparent, as adrenaline can initially mask the pain. You might not realize you've injured your shoulder until hours or even days after a crash.

When diagnosing a SLAP tear, doctors typically start with a physical examination, where they test the shoulder's range of motion and stability. However, because SLAP tears can be difficult to diagnose through examination alone, doctors often order imaging tests. An MRI allows doctors to see the soft tissues of the shoulder in detail, including the labrum.

What are my treatment options for SLAP tears?

Treatment for a SLAP tear depends on the severity of your injury. Conservative medical treatments are often the first line of defense. Doctors usually start with rest, ice, and anti-inflammatory medications. Physical therapy can also help strengthen the muscles around the shoulder and improve stability and function.

For more severe tears or cases that don't respond to conservative treatment, surgery may be necessary. The most common procedure is arthroscopic surgery, where a surgeon repairs the tear through small incisions using a camera and specialized medical instruments.

Recovery time can vary. For non-surgical treatments, patients might see improvement in a few weeks to a few months. After surgery, full recovery can take several months and require ongoing physical therapy.

What should I do if I suspect a SLAP tear after a car accident?

If you've been in a car accident and experienced shoulder pain or limited mobility, taking prompt action is key to your recovery. Here are the steps you should take:

- **Seek immediate medical attention:** Getting prompt medical attention prevents your shoulder injury from worsening. Plus, it helps create an official medical record and a link between your injury and the collision you were involved in.

- **Document everything:** Keeping detailed records of your medical visits, treatments, and how your shoulder injury affects your daily life can strengthen your injury claim.
- **Be cautious when talking to insurance companies:** Avoid giving recorded statements or accepting quick settlements before you understand the full extent of your injuries. And always make sure you have an attorney present when speaking to the other driver's insurance company.
- **Get legal help:** Having an experienced Houston car accident lawyer can help protect your rights and often improve your ability to receive fair financial compensation.

How much is my SLAP tear claim worth?

If you sustain a SLAP tear due to a car accident, you may be eligible for compensation through a settlement with the other driver's insurance company. However, you often shouldn't accept the first settlement offer, which could turn out to be a lowball offer that doesn't even come close to covering all your accident expenses.

Instead, let a Houston attorney review any offers you receive, investigate your car accident and determine how much money you're entitled to receive before negotiations begin. Your settlement should include all damages, legal term for financial losses. Damages often include:

- Immediate medical expenses and ongoing treatment.
- Current and future loss of income due to your injury.
- Vehicle repair estimates and costs.
- Damage to or loss of personal property during your crash.
- Non-economic damages such as pain and suffering and loss of enjoyment of life.

Don't wait to get the legal help you need

If you sustained a SLAP should injury in a car crash in Houston that wasn't your fault, don't let insurance companies push you around or shortchange you on compensation. The experienced attorneys at [Smith & Hassler](#) can fight for your rights and maximize your settlement. If the insurance companies won't settle, we're prepared to take your case to trial.

Our law firm has over 30 years of experience [building strong cases](#), handling pushy insurance companies, and getting fair compensation for crash victims. That includes \$800,000 for a client who sustained back, neck, and shoulder injuries in an intersection crash.

With our Houston car accident attorneys on your side, you can focus on recovery while they handle every aspect of your case. [Contact us](#) today for a free consultation. Our law firm works on a contingency fee basis, so you pay nothing unless they win your case.