Untreated tendons and ligaments give chronic pain

Question: What is difference between a tendon and a ligament and how can they heal after being injured?

Answer: There is a difference between tendons and ligaments and how they heal. Tendons connect muscle to bone making it possible for you to perform many every day physical activities. Overuse or damage to the tendon over a long period of time causes the collagen fibers in the tendons to form small tears, a condition called tendonitis. Damage to tendons most often occurs in the knee, ankle, shoulder, wrist, bicep, calf and Achilles tendons. An acute or traumatic injury to a tendon and its contiguous muscle is called a strain.

Ligaments are composed of collagen fibers that hold one bone to another, stabilizing the joint and controlling the range of motion. When a ligament is damaged it is no longer able to provide support, weakening the joints. A traumatic injury to a ligament is called a sprain.

Tendons and ligaments have poor blood supply. Combined with the stress of day-to-day activities, they do not heal from damage easily. As a result the tendons and ligaments become inefficient causing chronic pain and weakness.

Any trauma to a tendon or ligament should be treated immediately with ice for the first 48 hours with 15 minutes of icing every two hours. Initial restriction of movement and stabilization of the injured joint is suggested initially. I prefer to get my patients active with their injured joint as soon as swelling and inflammation have subsided. This brings new blood to the joint and minimizes

collagen or scar formation. Modern chiropractic and physical therapy offer many new advances in dealing with ligament and tendon injuries, including laser light therapy, cross fiber manipulative techniques, electronic stimulation improvements and even better nutritional support.

Quote of the week: *“Always listen to the experts. They’ll tell you what can’t be done and why. Then do it.”* – Robert Heinlein