

Child health information factsheet

Osgood Schlatters

Osgood Schlatters is a very common cause of knee pain in young athletes, it is a condition where the bony lump below your knee cap becomes painful and swollen during and after exercise.

The reason for this is the main thigh muscle (the quadriceps) attaches to this bony lump. When our bones grow our muscles have to stretch so during a growth spurt the thigh muscle becomes tight.

When you play sports the muscle then pulls on the bone causing pain and swelling. The more this happens the larger the lump becomes.

It usually affects those:

- Between ten and 15 years old
- Who are having a 'growth spurt'
- Involved in sports, usually sports that involve running and jumping.

There is nothing you can do to stop Osgood Schlatters. It will stop when you stop growing. However the following will help to relieve the symptoms.

Rest

- Cut down on the time you spend playing sport till the pain has gone
- Avoid sports that involve a lot of running or jumping. Swimming can be a useful substitute.

Ice

- Ice the affected area for ten to 15 minutes especially after activity
- Make sure you protect the skin by wrapping the ice in a towel.

Elevation

- Elevate the leg when painful and swollen especially after sports.

Pain relief

- Pain relieving medication may reduce pain and swelling but you need to discuss options with a pharmacist or your GP

Gentle muscle stretches

Hold stretches for 30 seconds three times a day.



Quadriceps (front of leg)



Hamstring (back of leg)



Getting better

It may take several weeks or months for the pain to completely stop. In most people, Osgood Schlatters goes away on its own with a little rest and time.

However if you ignore the pain and play through it, the condition may get worse and be more difficult to treat.

When the pain is completely gone, you can slowly return to your previous level of activity.

With future growth spurts the pain may return therefore keep doing the stretches and follow the advice given.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact

The paediatric physiotherapy department, B level, west wing,
Southampton General Hospital: **023 8079 4560**

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023 8079 4688 for help.**