

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Baker's Cyst Is Knee Affliction

A Baker's cyst is a condition marked by swelling at the back of the knee. Baker's cysts appear as painless masses behind the knee that are more noticeable when a person fully extends his/her knee.

The cyst is usually the result of some other knee condition, such as arthritis or even a tear in the meniscus. The swelling from these problems causes fluid to build up in the knee, eventually forming a cyst, and causing a dull, aching pain. Prolonged walking or standing provokes the pain, which improves with rest, elevation, and pain medication.

Most orthopaedic surgeons treat Baker's cysts conservatively and without surgery. Many times Baker's cysts disappear spontaneously, but the timeframe varies.

If the cyst is large and causes significant pain, your doctor may use the following treatments. The first step is to get the pain under control by using ice. Over-the-counter pain medications such as Tylenol or anti-inflammatories such as Motrin and Aleve are also helpful. Heat can also relieve the pain, as can analgesic creams.

A knee brace may provide additional stability. If support helps alleviate the pain, a simple elastic bandage may help. Avoid activities such as squatting, kneeling, heavy lifting, climbing, and running if these activities further aggravate the pain.

Rehabilitate the knee by exercising in controlled motions. Your doctor may prescribe therapy focused on stretching and strengthening your thigh muscle and/or the tendon in your kneecap.

Arthroscopic surgery or open surgery may be necessary if the cyst is extremely large, painful or does not respond to conservative treatment.



Scott T. Glaeser, MD

Sheboygan Orthopaedic Associates
Medical Arts—Superior Avenue
2920 Superior Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53081
920/458-3791



St. Nicholas Hospital

3100 Superior Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53081
920/459-8300

www.stnicholashospital.org

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