

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Coping with Bursitis

If you are experiencing swelling, redness, and pain around a joint, you may have bursitis. A common complaint, bursitis is the inflammation of a bursa, a fluid-filled sac that surrounds joints or tendons. Bursas cushion muscles or tendons and bones as they move across each other.

Irritation, injury, or pressure to a bursa can cause inflammation, resulting in the pain and swelling known as bursitis. Common causes of bursitis include:

- Injury to a joint during sports activities
- Frequent irritation of a body part from everyday activities such as yard work, shoveling snow, and house painting
- Kneeling on a hard or raised surface for long periods
- Repetitive pressure on the point of the elbow, often from leaning on a table or desk for a long time

Your doctor may recommend a physical examination and ask about recent activities. By feeling the painful joint and surrounding area, your doctor may be able to identify a specific area of tenderness. Your physician may also draw a sample of fluid from the bursa to rule out infection and find the cause of your bursitis. You may also have x-rays and blood tests.

To relieve symptoms of bursitis, your doctor may recommend rest of the affected area; no pressure on the area until swelling subsides; an ice pack to help relieve pain; exercises to strengthen the muscles.

Your doctor may also prescribe an anti-inflammatory drug and if symptoms persist, he/she may inject the inflamed area with a steroid drug, such as cortisone, and a local anesthetic to reduce swelling, redness, and pain. Your doctor may recommend surgery to remove the bursa if your condition continues to be troublesome despite treatment.



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