

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Knee Pain in Children

Osgood-Schlatter Disease is a frequently occurring condition in young people characterized by swelling, tenderness, and aching pain beneath the knee.

Osgood-Schlatter Disease is not really a disease, but rather an overuse syndrome. Children between the ages of 9 and 13, especially youths who are extremely active in sports, are most often afflicted. It is a temporary condition often affecting both knees. The knee will be slightly swollen and warm and there may be a tender bony bump below the kneecap. The bump hurts when pressed.

Kneeling, jumping, climbing stairs, running squatting or any activity in which the knee is bent or fully extended may prove painful to those with the condition. Typically, children involved in sports like basketball, volleyball, soccer, figure skating, and gymnastics are prone to develop this condition.

Rest is the main prescription for children affected with Osgood-Schlatter Disease. With rest, the pain usually goes away within six to 18 months. It is not necessary to eliminate athletic activity but it should be limited. Using a heating pad or warm, moist compresses at the site for 15 minutes before activity and/or using ice for 20 minutes after activity may help. Your doctor may prescribe a brace or cast and pain relievers like ibuprofen to reduce the pain and swelling. A course of stretching activities during the healing process, including quadriceps and hamstring stretches may prove helpful. Once the pain is completely gone, your child may slowly resume regular involvement in the sporting activities.

If the pain and condition are ignored symptoms may become harder to treat, and a total break from activity may become necessary. After the pain is completely gone, strengthening exercises including straight-leg raises, short-arc quadriceps exercises, wall slides, and jumping rope may prevent future flare-ups.



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