

Knee Pain

Knee pain is a common reason people visit their doctors. Knee pain can be caused by an injury, overuse or other medical conditions: gout, infection and arthritis may be the root cause of the pain.

Symptoms

Pain, swelling and stiffness can be symptoms of a knee injury. Common injuries and medical conditions causing pain include:

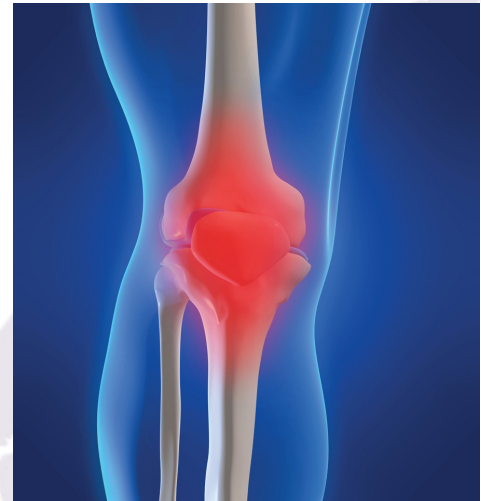
- **Ligament injuries** - immediate pain that worsens when you try to walk or bend your knee.
- **Tendon injuries** - pain; swelling in the front of the knee or just below the kneecap; pain worsens when you run, squat, jump or climb stairs.
- **Meniscus injuries** - pain; inability to straighten your knee completely (it will feel locked); and swelling that occurs slowly (as long as 24-36 hours after the injury).
- **Bursitis** - pain, swelling, warmth, redness; redness; limited range of motion; aching and stiffness when you walk.

See a Doctor

- When you have noticeable knee swelling.
- When you are unable to bear weight on your knee.
- When you have pain that worries you.
- When you have a fever in addition to redness, pain and swelling in your knee.

Risk Factors

- Excess weight.
- Overuse - any repetitive activity.
- Lack of muscle flexibility or strength -leading cause of knee injuries.
- Teenage girls are more likely than boys to experience an ACL tear or a dislocated kneecap.
- Age - Osteoarthritis and gout are seen in older adults more.
- High-risk sports - jogging, basketball jumps, alpine skiing.
- Mechanical problems - one leg shorter than the other, misaligned knees and flat feet.



Tests and Diagnosis

- Comprehensive medical history and physical examination.
- X-rays.
- Computerized Tomography (CT).
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging).

Treatment and Drugs

- **Compression bandage** - To prevent fluid build-up. Lightweight, breathable and self-adhesive.
- **Physical Therapy** - The focus is on strengthening the muscles in the back and front of your thigh, your calf, hip and ankle.
- **Surgical options** - This depends upon the type of injury and the amount of damage to your knee; risk of future injury or damage if you don't have surgery; and your lifestyle (whether or not you play sports and what sports you play).

Lifestyle and Home Remedies for Minor Injuries

- **Protection** - crutches or brace dependent upon injury type.
- **Rest** - take a break from normal activities for a day or two.
- **Ice** - reduces pain and inflammation. Apply for ONLY 20 min 3 times per day.
- **Elevation** - reduces swelling.
- **Anti-inflammatory medications** - aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These medications can have side effects, take only as recommended.
- If you don't notice any improvement in 3 -7 days, see your doctor.

Prevention

- Keep extra weight off.
- Build up strength and flexibility.
- Be smart about exercise. You may need to change sports.
- Make sure your shoes fit well.
- Baby your knees - Use kneepads to protect your knees during activity. Use a seat belt in case of an auto accident.
- Listen to your body and take frequent breaks.