

# OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE

(Osteochondrosis)



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A common, temporary condition involving the knee and tibia (shin bone). It occurs often in young athletes (boys more than girls) during the pre-teen or teenage growing years. Usually, only one knee is affected. Osgood-Schlatter disease (OSD) is named for the two doctors who first described it.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Swelling, pain, and tenderness below the knee joint and over the shin bone. The symptoms may be mild to severe.
- Pain worsens with activity and gets better with rest. Pain may occur with jumping, kneeling, running, climbing stairs, or anytime the knee is bent and extended.
- Bony bump may be felt just below the kneecap. It may feel tender, warm, and hurt when pressed.

### CAUSES

A combination of rapid growth and stress on the knee joint due to overuse. The tendon in the kneecap that connects it to the tibia becomes inflamed due to constant pulling by the quadriceps muscles. The tendon may stretch and tear away (called avulsion) from the tibia and take a piece of bone with it.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Sports and activities that involve running, jumping, cutting, or jogging.
- Boys between 11 and 18. As more girls participate in sports, their risk of OSD increases.
- Rapid skeletal growth.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive measures. Encourage a child to exercise moderately, avoiding extremes.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually resolves on its own within 1 to 2 years. Some discomfort may persist for 2 to 3 years or until growth is completed. A permanent, painless bump may remain below the knee.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- In a few cases, chronic pain may occur.
- About 60% of adults who have had OSD have some pain when kneeling.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam of the leg and ask questions about your symptoms and activities. Medical tests may include an x-ray or bone scan of the knee to confirm the diagnosis.
- Treatment may involve ice or heat, drugs (if needed for pain), rest, and limits on sports activities.
- Apply ice to the affected area several times a day for the first 2 to 3 days to reduce swelling and pain.
- After a few days, heat may help discomfort. Use warm compresses, a heating pad, or take warm baths.
- Stretching exercises may be prescribed.
- Occasionally, other treatments may be recommended depending on symptoms. These may include using crutches, having a leg cast or splint, or wearing an elastic knee brace.
- Surgery (rarely needed) if other treatment fails.

### MEDICATIONS

For minor discomfort, you may use nonprescription drugs such as ibuprofen.

### ACTIVITY

- Your health care provider will advise you of the limits on sports and activities. Each individual case is different. The usual recommendation is to stop any sports or activities that cause pain. Participation may be permitted when it does not cause pain. Resuming some activities too quickly could make the symptoms worse.
- When you return to normal sports activities, recommendations may include wearing a knee brace, special insoles in your shoes, using heat before and ice on your knee after your activity, and stretching and strengthening exercises.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- Your child has symptoms of Osgood-Schlatter disease.
- The following occur during treatment:
  - Pain increases.
  - Fever.

Special notes:

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More notes on the back of this page