

Orthopaedic Connection

Patello-femoral Pain

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Patello-femoral pain is a general term that doctors use to describe symptoms in the front of the knee. The kneecap (patella) sits on the front of the thigh bone (femur) so it's called patello-femoral.

There are several common causes for pain in the front of the knee.

- Chondromalacia
- Trauma to the knee over time
- Patella malalignment
- Patella compression due to weight lifting
- Osteoarthritis

Chondromalacia

This has been described in other articles, but to review, it refers to a softening or fissuring of the articular tissue in a joint, in this case the kneecap. Roughening of the surface (which is normally incredibly smooth) causes a scraping which can be felt and even heard. It's especially noted rising from a chair or climbing stairs.

Chondromalacia is a forerunner of osteoarthritis. It affects women more than men and is often present in both knees.

Symptoms

- Pain in area of kneecap
- Worse after prolonged sitting
- Painful to climb stairs
- Worse with squatting or jumping
- Buckling of the knee
- Sticking sensation of the patella
- Often present in both knees

Other Possible Causes

- Torn cartilage (meniscus)
- Patella tendon inflammation
- Quadriceps tendon inflammation

Treatment

As always I have to pinpoint the diagnosis first.

- Thigh muscle (quadriceps strengthening is essential)
- Avoid kneeling or squatting
- Wear a knee sleeve that I can prescribe

- Maybe Glucosamine/Chondroitin if I feel it can help in your case
- Possibly a steroid (cortisone) injection
- Motrin or similar anti-inflammatory
- Arthroscopic surgery sometimes

Patello-femoral pain is among the most common conditions I see in the office and can be one of the hardest to treat.

Since there can be other causes than Chondromalacia, proper treatment depends on arriving at the correct diagnosis.

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It contains a world of musculoskeletal information you and your family and friends can use!

Website, Your Orthopaedic Connection, Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Please check it out. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush