

Bursitis

Causes -

A bursa is a fluid filled sac that sits between two surfaces in a joint and it acts as a lubricator during movement. Bursitis is inflammation of the bursa.

There are over 150 bursae in the body, so you can get bursitis in any one of these bursae. The most common forms of bursitis are shoulder (subacromial) bursitis, elbow (olecranon) bursitis, hip (trochanteric) bursitis, knee (prepatellar) bursitis.

There are many causes of bursitis, however the most common are:

- Repetitive strain injury (eg. washing all the windows at once may cause shoulder bursitis)
- An impact or traumatic injury (eg. falling on or knocking your hip may cause hip bursitis)
- From prolonged pressure (eg. prolonged kneeling on hard tiles while cleaning the floor may cause knee bursitis).

Symptoms -

The symptoms will vary between individuals and between joints. However, some of the common symptoms include:

- Pain when moving the joint
- Worsening pain with repetitive movement of the joint
- Pain with prolonged pressure to the joint (eg. sleeping on the affected shoulder or hip)
- An ache that may radiate further down the limb (eg. a shoulder bursitis can cause pain in the shoulder with an *ache into the forearm or wrist*. A hip bursitis can cause pain in the hip with an *ache into the lower leg or ankle*)
- Weakness in the muscles around the joint
- Reduced range of movement in the joint.

Treatment –

A bursitis injury can worsen quite quickly, therefore we recommend that you seek immediate physio if you suspect or have a scan confirming a bursitis.

You (At home)

Here are a few things that you can do at home to help reduce your pain right away.

- Avoid aggravating activities (eg. Sport or certain household chores)
- Avoid sleeping on the affected side. It is best to sleep on your back or on the unaffected side.
- Take pain medication as directed by your doctor or pharmacist
- Apply ice to the affected joint (10minutes, morning and night)

Your Physiotherapist

- Massage to reduce pain
- Ultrasound therapy to reduce inflammation and pain
- Acupuncture, dry needling
- Cupping
- Taping the joint to provide extra support
- Strengthening exercises to support the joint
- Advice using anti-inflammatory gels or medication

Less conservative treatments are also available to treat particularly difficult long standing cases. This includes corticosteroid injections and occasionally surgery.

When to seek help –

It is much easier to treat an acute bursitis compared to a chronic one. Therefore, we recommend that you seek help from your physio as soon as you suspect bursitis. This will help to reduce treatment time, meaning less visits to the physio and less medication.

At first, your physio will provide you with hands on treatment to reduce your immediate pain. Bursitis relapses are very common, months and sometimes even years down the track if there is an underlying issue. Our physios are highly trained in assessing the cause of your bursitis and will also provide you with a strengthening program to address any underlying issues and prevent relapse.



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