

Osteoarthritis of the Knee



Overview

Knee pain may keep you from being as active as you like. And it may come from a gradual breakdown of your knee's cartilage. That's a protective tissue on the ends of your bones. In a healthy knee, the bones glide smoothly against each other. But in a knee with osteoarthritis, cartilage begins to wear away. Bone rubs against bone. Bony bumps we call "bone spurs" may form.

Causes

Why does knee cartilage break down? For many, it's a part of the wear and tear of aging. For others, it's linked to an injury. Your risk for osteoarthritis of the knee is higher if you have a job that puts a lot of stress on your knees. Being obese raises your risk, too. Ask your doctor about other risk factors.

Symptoms

Symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knee include pain, swelling and stiffness. You may have trouble bending or extending your knee. It may feel weak. It may lock or buckle when you walk. Standing or walking for a long time can make your knee feel worse.

Treatment

How do we treat osteoarthritis of the knee? In the early stages, things like physical therapy, weight loss, and a knee brace may help. Medications and joint injections may help, too. If those aren't working, you may need surgery. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.