

Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome



Overview

This is a pain you feel in the front of your knee. It involves the patella. That's the bone we commonly call the "kneecap." The patella slides up and down in a groove on your femur as you bend and extend your knee. If you have this syndrome, you may have injured the soft tissues that support and cushion your kneecap. Or, you may have some damage to the cartilage on the underside of the kneecap.

Causes

You can develop this syndrome if you repeatedly stress your knees. That can happen if you do a lot of physical activity that involves running, squatting or climbing stairs. It can develop if you use poor training techniques or equipment. You can develop it if you change your exercise routine, change your shoes or change the surface you play on. This condition can also result from problems with your anatomy. For example, you may have alignment problems with your legs or kneecaps, or you may have a muscle imbalance that affects your knees.

Symptoms

This syndrome can cause pain under and around one or both kneecaps. It's a dull, aching sensation. You may feel it more during activity, and also after you sit with your knees bent for a long time. And, you may hear popping or cracking sounds in your knee.

Treatment

Patellofemoral pain syndrome can often be treated with rest, ice, compression and elevation. You may benefit from medications and orthotics. If these aren't helpful, you may benefit from surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.