

# CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH OSGOOD-SCHLATTER DISEASE



Osgood-Schlatter disease occurs in young athletes because of too much stress on the knee. This overuse disorder occurs more often in boys, at the time of the growth spurt.



The bony knob just below the kneecap becomes inflamed and painful.

An x-ray can confirm the diagnosis.



## What Is Osgood-Schlatter Disease?

Osgood-Schlatter disease is a painful condition that usually affects the rapidly growing knee. The bony knob just below the kneecap, where the tendon attaches to the leg bone (shinbone, or tibia), becomes painful.

This overuse disorder occurs more often in boys, usually 11 to 18 years old, at the time of the growth spurt. Girls, usually 8 to 16 years old, can also have it. This problem occurs after they take part in athletics or after a sports-related injury.

This condition usually causes no permanent damage. Most children recover completely.

## What Causes Osgood-Schlatter Disease?

The cause is vigorous exercise that may put too much stress on bones and muscles of the knee and lower leg, which are still growing.

With repetitive trauma the bony attachment tries to pull away from the leg bone, which causes inflammation (swelling) and tenderness.

## What Are the Symptoms of Osgood-Schlatter Disease?

Pain, tenderness, and swelling below the knee and on the shin are symptoms. They can occur in one or both legs. Pain gets worse when the knee is moved or the bony knob is pressed.

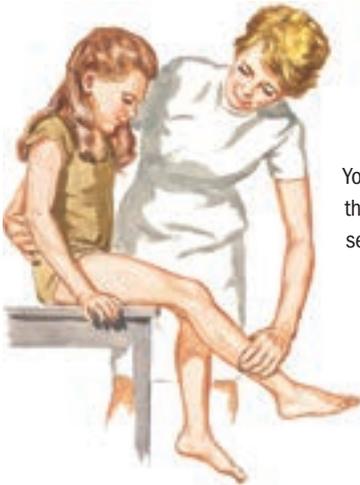
In mild cases, symptoms start to disappear in 6 weeks. After the area is rested, all symptoms should be gone in 1 year. Kneeling may be uncomfortable for 2 to 3 years. Pain usually disappears when the attachment site fuses to the leg bone.

## How Is Osgood-Schlatter Disease Diagnosed?

The health care provider will examine the area and may order an x-ray of the knee.

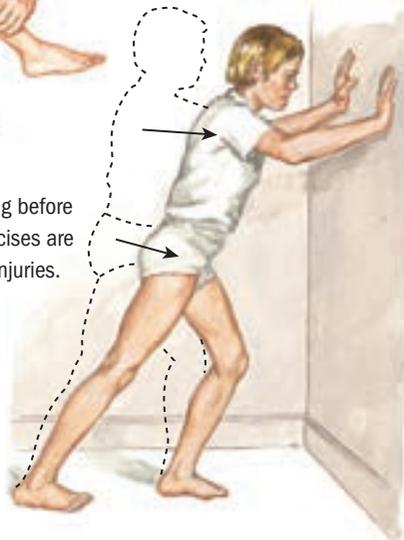


Resting the knee and taking a break from sports for about 6 weeks are usually all that's needed. Remember **RICE**: Rest, Ice, Compression (with an elastic bandage or splint), and Elevation.



Your health care provider may suggest that your child go to physical therapy sessions. Surgery is rarely needed.

Warming up and stretching before and after sports and exercises are important for preventing injuries.



### How Is Osgood-Schlatter Disease Treated?

Treatment involves RICE: Rest, Ice, Compressing the area with an elastic bandage or splint, and Elevating the area. Most children respond to a fairly brief period of rest during the most painful time. If an injury just occurred, the leg should be rested in a raised position for the first day. Ice should be used for the first few days. Not taking part in the sport that caused the injury for a few weeks may help.

Your health care provider may suggest seeing a physical therapist for exercises to stretch and strengthen muscles, speed recovery, and increase flexibility. These exercises can prevent the condition from returning.

Your health care provider may prescribe pain relievers and antiinflammatory medicines. If treatment doesn't help, a health care provider who specializes in bone and muscle disorders (orthopedist) may be seen. Severe cases may need surgery, but this is rare.

### DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Osgood-Schlatter Disease:

- ✓ **DO** encourage your child lose weight if needed.
- ✓ **DO** have your child do less strenuous activities.
- ✓ **DO** have your child do exercises prescribed by the physical therapist.
- ✓ **DO** have your child rest and immobilize the area as needed.
- ✓ **DO** have your child take medicines as prescribed.
- ✓ **DO** call your child's health care provider if the pain begins to limit activities or returns after treatment.
- ✓ **DO** have your child warm up and stretch for 15 to 30 minutes before and after activities.
- ⊗ **DON'T** let your child participate in the sport or activity that caused the injury for 6 weeks.
- ⊗ **DON'T** let your child do other activities in which the leg is stressed for 6 weeks.

#### FROM THE DESK OF

#### NOTES

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

##### Contact the following source:

- American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
- Tel: (847) 823-7186
- Website: <http://www.aaos.org>