

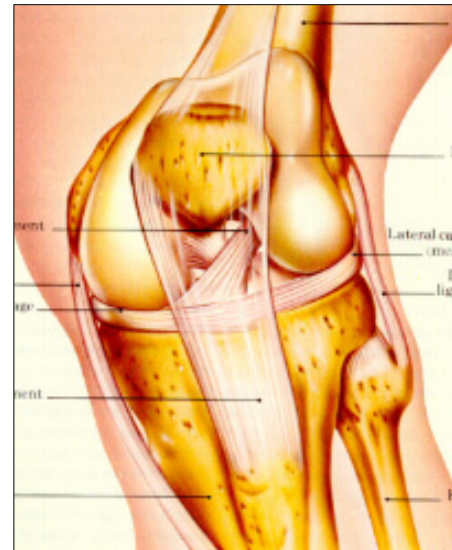
CONDITIONS WE TREAT – KNEE PROBLEMS

KNEE PROBLEMS

CHONDROMALACIA

Chondromalacia of the knee is a condition found mainly in women. It results when the cartilage which lines the joint surfaces of the knee cap becomes inflamed from mechanical strain. Strain on the knee and knee cap will ultimately cause the cartilage to swell becoming irregular. Cartilage then begins to break off calcified behind the kneecap. This can lead to the grinding and burning sensation associated with this condition. In fact an interesting term 'Theater sign' is given to the pain and burning in the kneecap region which results from sitting too long with your legs under you, as in a seated theater position.

Interestingly enough chondromalacia is one of those conditions that has everything to do with posture. Because women have wider hips for the purposes of child bearing they tend to have more angulation between the upper and lower leg than do men. Thus they stress the knee more. However few women seem to have problems here unless they also pronate excessively as well. Pronation, or inward rotation of the ankle while standing creates that little bit of extra stress that 'breaks the camel's back', or in this case promotes chondromalacia. Correcting this stress can be accomplished with correct shoe orthotics and in many cases specific therapy and exercises to strengthen the lower back, legs, calves and other selective muscle groups. The biomechanics of the entire region and low back must be accessed.



LIGAMENT TEARS OR THE KNEE

Certainly due to its weight bearing characteristics and high mobility, the knee is an area for acute injury in such sports as skiing, football, soccer, running and other stressing activities. Due to its construction, lateral & medial collateral ligaments, which connect the upper leg bone (femur) to the lower leg bone (tibia), may become torn. As in all ligament tears these may be of three grades and usually do not require surgery. Rest proper therapy including ultrasound and bracing are key to the timely recovery of this injury.

CRUCIATE LIGAMENT TEARS

Cruciate ligaments are small ligaments inside the knee joint which stabilize the joint, holding it tight. When one of the two, anterior or posterior cruciate ligaments are torn, surgery may be necessary depending on the stability of the knee and the plans of the individual for future athletic use. This is not an injury prone to resolve with conservative means of care. Evaluating biomechanical stresses of the knee is a good idea whether surgery is required or not to insure that the knee remains pain free and has its best function since poor mechanics will undermine the stability of the knee and slow healing.

MENISCUS TEARS

Two large cartilage pads cushion our knee joints and lie between the femur and tibia. In strenuous sport of accident these may be partially/mildly torn or torn more severely. The torn area may be stable or a fragment/flap of torn meniscus may shift and produce locking of the joint. The decision to have surgery relates to the degree of impairment experienced with these injuries. Having a chiropractic orthopedic evaluation of the mechanical stresses of the knee is a good idea whether surgery is required or not to insure that the knee remains pain free and has its best function.

OSGOOD-SCHLATTER'S DISORDER

Osgood-Schlatter's is a condition where usually due to enthusiastic sports play, the leg is stressed excessively causing the lowest attachment of the patellar tendon to pull and partially detach the immature growing bone where the tendon inserts at the tibia. This produces a sore, swollen and raised area on the front of the lower leg bone (tibia), about 2 inches below the knee cap. The area will usually heal on its own but may require reduction of activity and padding/bracing. One should not disregard this problem and continue to strain the area as complete detachment is possible.

BURSITIS

Bursitis of the knee is a painful but usually harmless condition of the knee when bursa are bruised or strained. The condition is usually a temporary one but may signal mechanical problems with the knee if recurrent. Bursa by the way are tiny sacs that the body has positioned at multiple points where tendons must cross to allow for lubrication and ease of movement. Bursitis responds well to ultrasound and other conservative therapies.