



# BURSITIS

## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Inflammation (swelling and pain) of a bursa. A bursa is a soft, fluid-filled sac that serves as a cushion between tendons and bones. Areas usually affected are near the shoulders, elbows, knees, pelvis, hips, or Achilles tendons.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain, swelling, tenderness, and limited movement in the affected joint. Pain may spread into nearby areas of the body.
- A feeling of warmth over the affected joint.

### CAUSES

Inflammation can be caused by overuse, injury, disease, or infection. Sometimes no cause is found.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Injury to a joint.
- Overuse of a joint.
- Exercising more than usual.
- Calcium deposits in shoulder tendons.
- Infection.
- Arthritis.
- Gout.
- People who suddenly increase their activity levels ("weekend warriors").
- Not stretching properly or over-stretching.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid injuries when possible. Don't overuse muscles. Wear protective gear for contact sports.
- Warm up before exercise. Cool down after exercise.
- Stay physically fit.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This is a common, but not serious problem. Symptoms usually improve in 7 to 14 days with treatment.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Prolonged healing time if activity is resumed too soon.
- Chronic bursitis may occur due to repeated injuries or recurrent attacks of bursitis.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Self-care may be all that is needed.

Use RICE therapy (rest, ice, compression, and elevation). Rest the affected joint. Use an ice pack to massage the area several times a day. Use compression by wearing an elastic bandage. Elevate the affected joint by resting it on a pillow.

You may use heat, in addition to ice, if it feels better. Apply a hot, wet towel or use a heating pad. A deep-heating ointment may be helpful.

- See your health care provider if self-care does not help or symptoms are severe. Bursitis can be diagnosed by a physical exam. Medical tests are usually not done.
- Your health care provider may sometimes drain fluid from the joint with a needle. Surgery is rarely needed.
- Physical therapy may be recommended to maintain flexibility, mobility, and strength of the joint.

### MEDICATIONS

- Use nonprescription acetaminophen or ibuprofen for mild pain.
- Your health care provider may prescribe:

Nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs or creams.

Antibiotics (if the bursa is infected).

Prescription pain relievers for severe pain.

Injection with a local anesthetic mixed with a corticosteroidal drug.

### ACTIVITY

- Rest the affected joint as much as possible. It may help to wear a sling or a brace, or to use crutches until the pain becomes easier to bear. Begin normal, slow joint movement as soon as pain permits.
- Follow directions for any recommended home exercise routines.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of bursitis that is severe or self-care methods do not help.
- New symptoms develop after treatment.

