



Housemaids Knee

There are two types of housemaids knee, known medically as Prepatellar Bursitis (a swelling over the front of the kneecap) and Infrapatellar Bursitis (a swelling just below the kneecap)

A bursa is a small fluid filled sac, which is commonly found at bony points, acting as a protective cushion. Bursitis means inflammation of the sac, resulting in a fluid filled swelling.

Prepatellar Bursitis occurs mainly as a result of trauma, for example, landing heavily on the knee on a hard surface, receiving a direct kick to the area during football or by hitting the boards in ice hockey.

Swelling occurs almost immediately or over a period of 24 – 48 hours, and can vary from a slight swelling to that of the size of a small orange. There may be immediate pain relating to the bruising of the underlying soft tissues and the knee cap. Thereafter pain is usually in proportion to the amount of swelling and activity.

The problem can become chronic with persistent swelling and discomfort when placing firm pressure to the area.

Treatment consists of preventing further trauma by modifying activity and appropriate padding to the affected area. Relief of pressure to the knee with a foam donut shaped dressing may help.

Physiotherapy in the form of electrotherapy modalities can be beneficial as can anti-inflammatory medication.

Your Doctor can draw off fluid from persistent swellings.

Infrapatellar Bursitis (Parson's Knee, Carpet-layer's knee)

This form of bursitis, as you can probably tell by the title, is more likely to be suffered by those people where constant kneeling is an occupational hazard! Treatment is much the same as for the other type of bursitis. Avoid unnecessary kneeling. Use a moulded, stress-relieving type of padding to kneel on.

Heat or ice applied to the area before and after exercise can be helpful, depending on the acuteness of the problem.

Anti-inflammatories can also help.