



Osgood Schlatter's is a common cause of knee pain in growing teenagers; even more common amongst young athletes. The pain comes from repeated running and jumping which leads to small areas of repetitive damage in the place where the quadriceps muscle tendon attaches through the knee cap and its tendon into the bony lump just below the knee cap. Osgood Schlatter's is one of a group of conditions caused by apophysitis. Apophysitis is irritation and swelling of an apophysis This is where a tendon attaches to a growing part of a bone (growth plate).

As we grow our muscles have to stretch and so when a child has a growth spurt, the thigh muscle becomes tight. Then, when they play sports, the muscle pulls on the bone causing pain and swelling. The more this happens the larger the lump becomes. Therefore because this physical activity puts more stress on the bones and muscles, children who participate in sport, particularly those who are doing running and jumping sports, are more commonly affected with this condition. Less active teenagers may also experience this problem, however.

Osgood Schlatter's normally affects those who are between 10 and 15 years old, who are in the midst of a growth spurt, and those who are involved in sports usually like running and jumping.

It usually resolves itself but, it can take some time for the symptoms to resolve completely, at times up to 2-3 years. It will stop when the child has finished growing. However, there are things that can be done to relieve and improve the symptoms.

In most cases simple things like rest, simple pain relief and stretching/strengthening exercises

The following things can help: -

- rest, so reducing the amount of time a child is playing sport, until the pain has gone
- avoiding sports that involve lots of running and jumping.
- ice on the affected area for 10-15 minutes a day especially after activity.
- Simple pain relief can help to reduce pain or swelling.
 - Options for this would need to be discussed with a Pharmacist, GP or Consultant managing the child.
- Physiotherapy
- Gentle muscle stretches - holding the stretches of the quadriceps and hamstrings for 30 seconds up to 3 times a day can help reduce the symptoms.

It can take some time for pain to completely stop but in most people, Osgood Schlatter's will go away on its own with rest and time. However, ignoring the pain and playing through it will not always see a resolve and the pain can get worse and become more difficult to manage. Once the pain has resolved a slow return to previous activity is recommended. It may be necessary to maintain stretches of the hamstring and quadriceps particularly when a growth spurt is occurring. If all of these are not successful in reducing the pain then consideration can be given to immobilising the joint for a period of time. This would be best done under the supervision of a Paediatric Orthopaedic Specialist.