

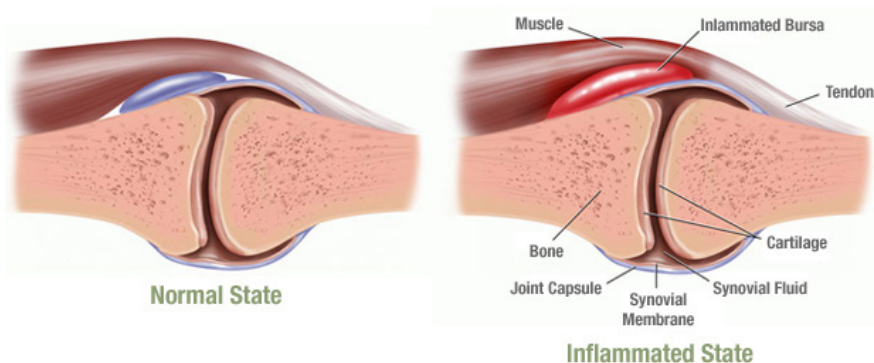
Understanding Bursitis: How Can Physical Therapy Help You?

Anatomy and Function of a Bursa

Bursae are fluid-filled sacs that aid in joint motion. There are over 150 bursae in the human body. Bursae are filled with synovial fluid (a lubricant) and they secrete this fluid to counter joint friction with movement. They function to provide a cushion between bones and muscles and their tendons, allowing pain-free movement. Without a bursa, the tendons would grind over the bones with each movement. When bursitis occurs, it is the inflammation of the bursa sac causing irritation and making movements painful and difficult. Bursitis occurs most often later in life, a majority of individuals being over 40 years of age. You can see signs of bursitis if the affected joint feels achy or stiff, if it hurts more when you press on it or move it, or it looks swollen or red. How Bursitis is Diagnosed

Bursitis is often diagnosed through ruling out other pathologies and gathering a detailed medical history and physical exam. Imaging can be useful to diagnose bursitis; while X-ray can rule out other pathologies, it cannot positively establish the presence of bursitis. Ultrasound or MRI can be used to confirm the diagnosis.

BURSITIS – BURSAE INFLAMMATION



Common Causes

Bursitis can occur for a number of different reasons. Repetitive motions, muscle weakness, poor coordination, improper posture, direct trauma, surgery, calcium deposits, infection or autoimmune disorders can all directly cause bursitis and result in pain and irritation with joint movement.

Types of Bursitis

Subacromial, prepatellar, trochanteric, olecranon and pes anserine are all common areas where bursitis can occur. Subacromial bursitis presents with pain around the shoulder, usually caused by repetitive throwing or overhead reaching. This is the most common of all the types. Prepatellar and pes anserine bursitis affect the knee joint and can be irritated with kneeling or stairs. Trochanteric

affects the hip joint and can be caused by sudden increased amount of walking or jogging. This type may cause pain with lying on the affected side. Olecranon bursitis affects the elbow, also known as student elbow, and can often result in swelling.



Lori earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Kinesiology with a concentration in Exercise Science from James Madison University in 2010. Lori then attended Seton Hall University where she there received a Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2015.

Lori has had clinical rotations in areas of outpatient orthopedic, acute rehabilitation and subacute skilled nursing facility. She has worked with and treated a wide range of diagnoses and patient populations including amputations, cerebral vascular accidents, Parkinson's, cerebral palsy, joint replacements, traumatic brain injuries, arthritis and post-surgical.

Treatment Options

Conservative treatment is usually used first for the treatment of bursitis. This involves rest, ice and taking a pain reliever or anti-inflammatory medicines. If the bursitis is caused by infection, a prescribed antibiotic by a physician can be used. A corticosteroid injection can be used to decrease inflammation. Surgery may also be done to drain the bursa or remove it altogether, which is a more rare option. Physical therapy is a highly effective and less invasive option.

Physical Therapy and Bursitis

Physical therapists are educated and trained to help treat all types of bursitis. During the physical therapy evaluation, your therapist will take measurements to see what musculoskeletal deficits are present and design a personalized exercise program. The program will be targeted to your specific needs and will aim to improve several areas.

Increase Strength. Weak muscles can lead to injuries or coordination problems. By building up strength in the muscles, joints will move more efficiently and with improved mechanics, leading to decreased rubbing on the bursa and decreased irritation. Along with strength, power and endurance should be addressed since bursitis is often linked to overuse. Exercises may include free weights, TheraBands or weight-bearing activities.

Improve Range of Motion. Over time, from bursitis, joint motion may decrease due to pain or soft tissue changes. Your physical therapist may address this with passive range of motion exercises and then progress to active and stretching. Since any pressure on an inflamed bursa can increase pain, it is imperative to stretch any soft tissue structures that are tight or shortened to decrease pain.

Reduce Pain and Swelling. Therapeutic agents such as icing and electrical stimulation can be good ways to modulate pain and decrease swelling. This in turn will allow for the underlying pathologies to be treated. Relative rest can also alleviate pain. Your therapist can instruct you in activity modification and altering movement patterns to decrease the stress placed on the joint.

Reoccurrence Prevention

Once your bursitis is treated, your physical therapist will have provided you with a home exercise program. Bursitis can be a re-occurring ailment and your home program will help maintain your strength and flexibility. By making simple modifications, you can reduce your risk for bursitis and decrease the severity of flare ups. Your physical therapist will instruct you in proper lifting techniques and maintaining proper posture, and educate you on the importance of stretching and warming up prior to strenuous exercise.

At each one of All-Care Physical Therapy Center's facilities, our staff is knowledgeable and qualified to help you with bursitis. Call for an appointment today!



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