

CHONDROMALACIA PATELLA

What is Chondromalacia Patella?

A general term referring to cartilage damage on the undersurface of the patella (kneecap).

Symptoms:

Patellofemoral pain generally occurs in the front of the knee. It is often worsened with squatting, kneeling, sitting for prolonged periods of time, or walking up and down steps or inclines.

Causes: Overuse and repetitive stress on the knee joint, poor tracking of the kneecap and weak thigh musculature. Traumatic injury can also lead to patellar cartilage damage.

Risk Factors: Women, adolescents, and young adults are most often affected. Sports involving running or jumping can exacerbate symptoms.

Evaluation: Your orthopaedic provider will generally obtain X-Rays, a detailed history, and physical exam. Rare occasions can require MRI or CT scan.

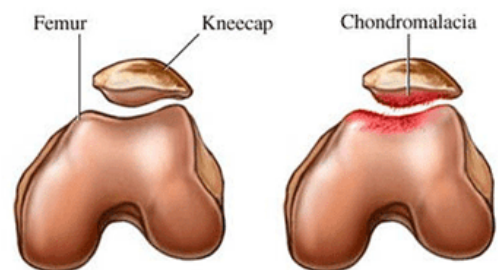
Conservative Treatment Options: NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), acetaminophen, physical therapy, a home exercise program, bracing, taping, and cortisone injections are all mainstays of conservative treatment.

General Knee Health: Weight loss and control, stretching, strengthening, shoe wear, activity modifications, rest and ice are all important parts of ongoing general knee wellness.

Surgical Options: Certain severe cases can require surgery including:

- **Arthroscopic Chondroplasty:** procedure performed to smooth the damaged cartilage under the kneecap in order to lessen friction.

- **Lateral Retinacular Release and other Patella Re-alignment Procedures:** A spectrum of operative procedures where the areas of high patella stress are reduced by either releasing overly tight structures (lateral release) or by re-aligning the entire extensor mechanism in cases where anatomical mal-alignment is putting excessive pressure on the patella (knee cap).
- **Other Cartilage Restoration Procedures including Cartilage Transplantation:** This is an advanced technique where the goal of the surgery is to actually transplant cells into the area which can be expected to form normal cartilage. With this technique, a biopsy is taken during the first arthroscopic surgery which is simply a small piece of cartilage removed from a non-critical area of the knee joint. This piece is sent to a laboratory where the tissue is cultured to produce many more cartilage cells until there is enough to transplant back into the knee joint.



Knee joints as seen from below

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