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Bursitis Advice

You have been seen by an Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) or Emergency Department (ED) doctor who has diagnosed you with Bursitis. This leaflet will provide you with information about your condition and likely recovery.

What is Bursitis?

A bursa is a soft bag of fluid that normally cushions a joint. Bursitis is an inflamed bursa that becomes swollen and painful. It is normally caused by an injury, repeated movements, arthritis and infections. Occasionally a cause cannot be identified. Bursitis can happen to any joint in the body. Joints commonly affected are elbow, knee, shoulder and hip.

There are two types of bursitis:

- Not- infected - this is the most common
- Infected

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest for the first 24-48 hours • Use ice packs (frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do), for 10-15 minutes to reduce swelling, if present. • Take the recommended medication e.g. Paracetamol or ibuprofen - see below for more information. • Do gentle movements of the joint to prevent it getting too stiff • Take any antibiotics you have been given as instructed on the packet/bottle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving the joint too much • Avoid activities that put pressure on it (like kneeling/resting on your elbow) • Use ice packs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o over areas of skin that are in poor condition o if you have poor sensation to cold o if you know you have poor circulation o Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn • Don't leave ice on while asleep • Don't use ice for more than 20 minutes at a time - you can cause damage to the tissue.

What treatment do I need?

Bursitis normally resolves on its own in a few weeks and treatment is aimed at reducing pain and swelling. If it is suspected that the bursitis is infected, then you will have been given a course of antibiotics.

Treatment includes:

- Rest and avoid activities that will put pressure on the joint
- Ice
- Painkillers
- Draining the fluid by a trained healthcare professional (however the fluid can build up again)

What worrying signs should I look out for?

- **Redness that spreads around the joint affected.**
- **If you have high temperature or feel shivery and hot.**
- **You are experiencing severe pain at the affected joint.**
- **You cannot move the affected joint.**

If you experience any of these symptoms you should attend the Grange University Hospital Emergency Department (GUH ED) and not a Minor injury unit (MIU).

How to avoid bursitis coming back?

- Use padding when putting pressure on joints for example, knee pads.
- Take breaks if you are doing things that put pressure on a joint, like kneeling.
- Avoid resting the elbows on hard surfaces for a prolonged period. Rather rest it on a padded surface or a cushion.
- Clean cuts and grazes over joints to prevent infections.

What should I take for pain?

Painkillers, such as **Paracetamol**, are useful to ease pain, but it is best to take them regularly for a few days or so rather than every now and then.

They can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you don't take any other product containing Paracetamol.

With all the medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.

Anti-inflammatory painkillers (like Ibuprofen) can relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling, however if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you shouldn't use them.

Side effects sometimes occur with anti-inflammatory painkillers - stomach pain and bleeding from the stomach, are the most serious. Some people with asthma, high blood pressure, kidney failure or heart failure may not be able to take them either.

If you are concerned about your progress, or have not improved within 10 days, contact your GP or attend GUH ED (not a MIU)

References: Bursitis - NHS

Scenario: Management | Management | pre-patellar bursitis | CKS | NICE
Olecranon Bursitis (Patient Info): Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment

**This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**