

Bursitis: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

A bursa is a small sac of fluid that helps the tissues around a joint slide over one another easily. Injury or overuse of a joint can cause pain, redness, and inflammation in the bursa (bursitis). Bursitis usually gets better if you avoid the activity that caused it. You can help prevent bursitis from coming back by doing stretching and strengthening exercises. You may also need to change the way you do some activities.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Put ice or a cold pack on the area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the next 3 days (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- After the 3 days of using ice, you may use heat on the area. You can use a hot water bottle; a warm, moist towel; or a heating pad set on low. You can also try alternating heat and ice.
- Rest the area where you have pain. Stop any activities that cause pain. Switch to activities that do not stress the area.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
 - Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.

- To prevent stiffness, gently move the joint as much as you can without pain every day. As the pain gets better, keep doing range-of-motion exercises. Ask your doctor for exercises that will make the muscles around the joint stronger. Do these as directed.
- You can slowly return to the activity that caused the pain, but do it with less effort until you can do it without pain or swelling. Be sure to warm up before and stretch after you do the activity.

When should you call for help?



Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse symptoms of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the area.
 - Pus draining from the area.
 - A fever.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **Q970** in the search box to learn more about **"Bursitis: Care Instructions"**.

©2006-2021 Healthwise, Incorporated.

This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.