

## Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome

### What is patellofemoral pain syndrome?

Patellofemoral pain syndrome refers to pain around the front of the knee, without signs of damage or other knee joint problems.

Patellofemoral pain syndrome may be due to a combination of alignment problems and overuse, which cause increased pressure between the kneecap (patella) and the bottom of the thigh bone (femur). It is most common in young and adolescent females.

### What are the symptoms of patellofemoral pain syndrome?

Pain at the front of the knee (or both knees) is the key symptom. The pain may be:

- hard to pinpoint
- transient (it may come and go)
- worse going up and particularly downstairs
- triggered by running and squatting
- worse after sitting still for a long period

You may also have a grating feeling when bending and straightening your knee, as well as some swelling around the kneecap.

### What does your doctor look for?

Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and the history of the problem as well as examining your knee.

### What investigations are needed?

Generally, your doctor will be able to make a diagnosis based on symptoms and physical examination. Tests like an X-ray and scans can't diagnose patellofemoral pain but might be needed if your symptoms are not typical and other conditions need to be ruled out.

### How is patellofemoral pain syndrome treated?

The symptoms usually improve if the knee is not overused and the activities that cause pain are avoided. If symptoms persist, treatment options for patellofemoral pain syndrome include:

- non-drug therapy (e.g. physiotherapy, taping of patella, shoe inserts)
- medications (e.g. anti-inflammatories)
- surgery is no longer recommended for most cases of patellofemoral pain syndrome