



Dr. Reznik's Layman's Guide to Common Knee Problems

By: Alan M. Reznik, MD, MBA

Knee problems can be quite concerning, but understanding these issues can help you make informed decisions about your health.

- 1 MENISCUS TEARS:** The meniscus is a rubbery cartilage in your knee that acts as a cushion between the thigh bone and shin bone. Tears in the meniscus can occur due to injury or wear and tear. Symptoms include pain, swelling, stiffness, and difficulty in fully extending or bending the knee.
- 2 KNEECAP PAIN (Chondromalacia Patella):** Chondromalacia patella, also known as runner's knee, is a condition where the cartilage on the underside of the kneecap becomes softened. This can result in pain, especially when walking downstairs or squatting. It is often caused by muscle imbalances or improper tracking of the kneecap.
- 3 ACL TEARS:** The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is one of the major ligaments in the knee, providing stability. ACL tears typically occur during sudden stops, changes in direction, or from direct impact. Symptoms include a popping sound, severe swelling, instability, and difficulty bearing weight on the affected leg.
- 4 MCL SPRAIN:** The medial collateral ligament (MCL) is located on the inner side of the knee and helps stabilize it. MCL sprains are common and often result from a direct blow to the outer knee or excessive twisting of the joint. Symptoms include pain, swelling, and instability on the inner side of the knee.
- 5 PATELLA TENDINITIS:** Patella tendinitis, also called jumper's knee, is an overuse injury affecting the tendon connecting the kneecap to the shin bone. It is often seen in athletes who engage in jumping or repetitive knee movements. Symptoms include pain, tenderness, and swelling just below the kneecap, especially during activities or after prolonged rest.
- 6 PATELLA SUBLUXATION OR DISLOCATION:** Patella subluxation or dislocation occurs when the kneecap partially or completely moves out of its normal position. This can happen due to injury or anatomic factors. Symptoms include sudden intense pain, inability to straighten the knee, and visible displacement of the kneecap.
- 7 IT BAND SYNDROME:** The iliotibial (IT) band is a thick band of tissue running along the outside of the thigh, attaching to the knee. IT band syndrome often occurs in runners and cyclists due to repetitive friction and can cause pain on the outer side of the knee. Symptoms include sharp or burning pain during activity and tenderness along the IT band.
- 8 KNEE SWELLING:** Knee swelling (Knee effusions) can result from various causes such as injury, inflammation, infection, Lyme disease, fractures, ligament tears, or underlying conditions like arthritis. It leads to a buildup of fluid within the knee joint, causing pain, stiffness, and limited range of motion.
- 9 PATELLA BURSITIS:** Bursae are small fluid-filled sacs that help reduce friction between bones, tendons, and muscles. Patella bursitis involves inflammation of the bursa in front of the kneecap, leading to swelling, tenderness, and pain, especially when kneeling or leaning on the knee.

(continued on page 2...)

Remember, if you experience **knee injuries, or ongoing pain, swelling and discomfort**, that fails to improve with simple treatment like rest, ice, elevation, and anti-inflammatory medications see an orthopedic surgeon for an accurate diagnosis and an appropriate treatment plan. ■

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He has served the American Academy of Orthopaedics in many national leadership roles including the patient safety committee, the committee on quality and research, the communications cabinet as well as an editor for the AAOS Now news journal. He currently holds 7 patents including 5 on the advancement of arthroscopic surgery. Dr. Reznik enjoys treating injuries in recreation, collegiate, ‘working’ and competitive athletes of all ages, including pediatric sports injuries.

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