

Orthopaedic Connection

Osgood-Schlatter Disease! What the?

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

What if you were in the office and I told you your youngster (child or grandchild) has Osgood-Schlatter Disease? Would you collapse? Faint?

Well relax, you know I would not lay that on a family, because I hate to use big "doctor words" in talking to patients and families. We won't do the Jeopardy thing either. I'll tell you straight up!

What Is It?

O-S is a very long scary name for a knee condition which is not a disease. Unfortunately we are stuck with calling it that as it was so named for two Orthopaedic Surgeons who described it in 1903.

Anyway, it is a fairly common knee condition occurring in young adolescents.

What Happens

The ends of a child's lower leg bones at the knee are still growing at this young age. The bones are far from fully developed and are vulnerable to tugging from the muscles and tendons; especially during vigorous activity or sports. During a growth spurt the bones can grow faster than the muscles causing increased pressure around the knee joint. The outcome in some children is that the tendon of the kneecap (patella) attached to the shinbone slightly tears away from the bone pulling a piece of bone with it.

Who Gets It

Boys more than girls. Boys between ages 10 - 15 who play sports involving a lot of running and jumping are especially affected.

Note: There are many other conditions that cause knee pain in adolescents. O-S is one, but there are many others I need to consider for proper diagnosis of knee pain in children.

Symptoms of O-S

- Pain below the kneecap
- Gets worse with running, jumping or kneeling
- May go away with rest
- Firm bump below the kneecap
- Painful to press on bump
- May be in both knees

How It's Treated

- Very careful knee exam and plain x-rays. (No MRI!)
- What kids don't want to hear - REST IT.
- Stop the sport that caused it.

- Ice to knee.
- Motrin for pain and inflammation.
- When improved, gradually resume the sport.
- A prescribed knee support (brace) can help.

Follow Up

- Don't expect the bump to completely disappear.
- It usually stays to some degree.
- Symptoms can persist until the growth center closes.
- Modification of activities can reduce pain.
- Brace may be needed for activities until growth is complete in growth center.
- Surgery is rarely needed fortunately.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website

www.orthopodsurgeon.com is a great source of musculoskeletal information that you can use. In addition it is your entry to the Gratiot County Herald Archive of all articles I have written for GCH Orthopaedic Connection. They are all listed, most recent all the way back to first. A couple of mouse clicks and the whole article appear!

The article and website cover everything I treat in the office and hospital. Check it out.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush