



Orthopedic Associates OF PORT HURON

What is Bursitis?

The definition of bursitis is “inflammation of a bursa”. A bursa is a fibrous sac that is filled with a lubricant called synovial fluid. The function of the bursa is to reduce friction at high-pressure points between tendons, skin and bones. Bursas help to allow healthy joints to have a smooth, gliding range of motion.

Common areas in which bursas become inflamed are in the shoulder (the subacromial bursa), at the elbow (the olecranon bursa), at the knee (prepatellar bursa), and at the hip (the trochanteric bursa). The bursa can become irritated by a direct blow to the area or from overuse of structures that are weak and imbalanced.

Symptoms of bursitis are pain, decreased range of motion at the affected joint, swelling, tenderness around the bursa, warmth around the area and decreased function of the affected joint. It is often difficult to make a diagnosis of bursitis because of the bursa’s close proximity to the surrounding tendons. In order to properly treat the bursitis, one must distinguish it from tendonitis, which is inflammation of the tendon.

Treatment of bursitis involves the following:

Protection: Change mechanics of activities to avoid further injury or irritation.

Rest: Do not perform activities that reproduce the pain symptoms.

Ice: Apply ice to the affected area for 15 minutes every 2 – 4 hours with the injured area elevated above the level of your heart.

Medication: Take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (aspirin, ibuprofen).

Injection: Sometimes a Cortisone injection from your physician into the bursa can be helpful in reducing the inflammation, which will reduce the pain and lack of function of the affected area.

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Rehabilitation: Consult your physical therapist to recommend stretching and strengthening exercises to restore musculoskeletal balance in the affected area to prevent future injuries.

We Keep You on the Move!

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