

Patellar Tendonitis

What is patellar tendonitis?

Patellar tendonitis is inflammation of the patella tendon, which connects the quadriceps muscle at the front of the thigh down to the top of the shin bone. The inflammation is due to small tears in the tendon caused by overuse. These small tears can sometimes develop into larger areas of damage, which prevent healing.

The quadriceps muscle and patella tendon enable you to extend your knee and run, kick and jump. In fact, patellar tendonitis is commonly called jumper's knee. It's a common condition in people who play jumping sports such as football, basketball and volleyball. But you don't need to participate in these sports to get patellar tendonitis. It's also common in runners, skiers and cyclists, as well as people with tight thigh muscles.

What are the symptoms of patellar tendonitis?

The main symptom of patellar tendonitis is pain under your kneecap. Initially the pain tends to only occur when you start physical activity. Over time, it may intensify to the point where you experience pain during everyday tasks like climbing stairs.

What does your doctor look for?

Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms, your general health and your lifestyle (e.g. what sports you play). Your doctor will also examine your knee, applying pressure to various points to identify areas of pain.

What investigations are needed?

Your doctor may request imaging tests such as X-ray, ultrasound or MRI.

How is patellar tendonitis treated?

The treatment options for patellar tendonitis include:

- non-drug therapy (e.g. physiotherapy, stretching exercises, strengthening exercises, strapping, massage, dry needling)
- medications (e.g. anti-inflammatories, platelet rich plasma injections into the joint)
- surgery to remove the damaged tissue and allow/promote healing