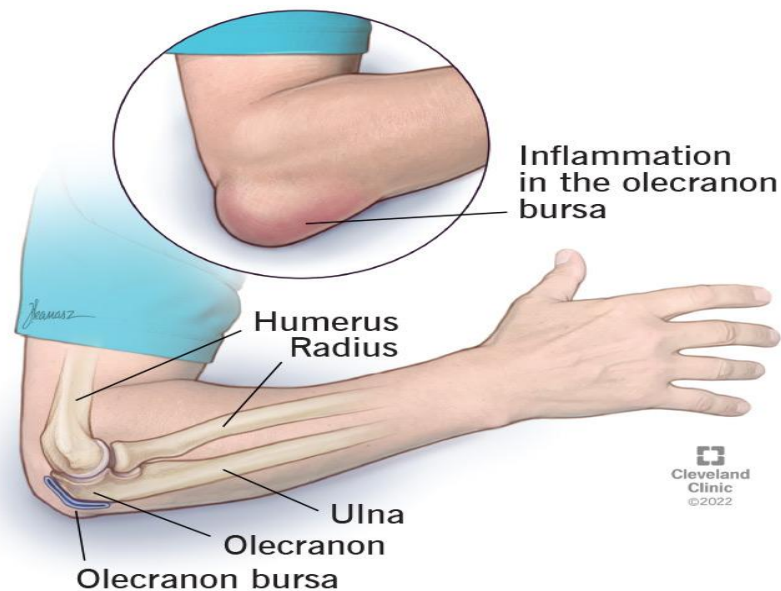


Olecranon Bursitis

Elbow (Olecranon) Bursitis



What is Olecranon Bursitis?

Olecranon bursitis is **inflammation of the bursa** located over the **tip of the elbow** (olecranon).

The **bursa** is a small fluid-filled sac that **reduces friction between skin, tendons, and bone**.

When it becomes inflamed, the elbow may **swell, become tender, and sometimes painful**.

Causes

- **Trauma or injury** – bumping the elbow
- **Repetitive pressure** – leaning on the elbow for long periods
- **Infection** – bacteria can infect the bursa (rare)
- **Medical conditions** – gout, rheumatoid arthritis, or other inflammatory conditions

Symptoms

- Swelling at the tip of the elbow
- Pain or tenderness, especially with pressure
- Redness or warmth (if infected)
- Limited movement if swelling is significant
- Sometimes a **fluid-filled lump** is noticeable

Diagnosis

- **Physical examination** by your GP or physiotherapist
- **Aspiration** (removing fluid) if infection is suspected
- **Blood tests or imaging** may be used in some cases

Treatment

Most cases improve with **conservative management**:

1. Rest and Activity Modification

- Avoid leaning on the elbow
- Cushion the elbow when sitting at a desk or working

2. Pain Relief

- Ice packs: 10–15 minutes several times a day
- Painkillers or anti-inflammatory medication as advised by your doctor

3. Compression and Elevation

- Light bandaging or compression may reduce swelling
- Elevate the arm when possible

4. Aspiration or Injection

- If swelling persists, a doctor may **drain excess fluid**
- Corticosteroid injections may be considered in some cases

5. Surgery

- Rarely needed, only if bursitis is **chronic or infected**
-

Self-Management Tips

- Avoid **pressure on the elbow**
 - Apply **ice** after activity if swollen
 - Use **cushioned supports** if working on hard surfaces
 - Gentle **range-of-motion exercises** once pain subsides
-

When to See Your Doctor

Seek urgent medical advice if:

- The elbow becomes **red, hot, or increasingly painful**
 - Fever develops (possible infection)
 - Swelling **does not improve** with rest and self-care
-

Prognosis

- Most cases improve within **a few weeks** with rest and conservative treatment
 - Recurrence is possible if the elbow continues to experience pressure or trauma
 - Early management improves outcomes
-

References:

- NHS: Olecranon bursitis

- British Journal of Sports Medicine: *Elbow bursitis guidelines*