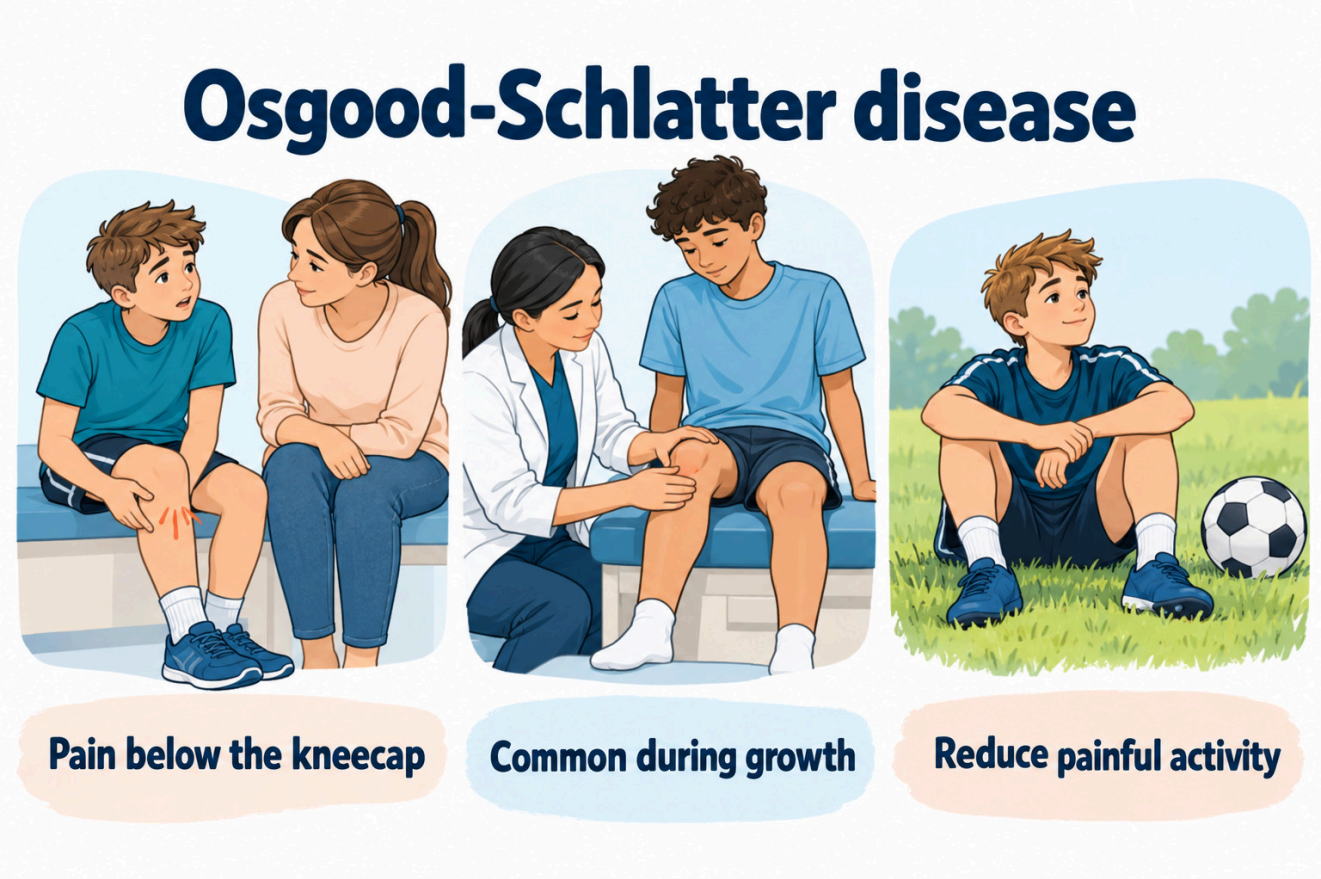
Osgood-Schlatter Disease

Information for children, parents and carers

Osgood-Schlatter Disease

A guide to symptoms, treatment and recovery



Understanding the condition

Osgood-Schlatter disease (OSD) is a common cause of pain just below the kneecap in growing children and teenagers. It involves irritation where the patellar tendon attaches to the shinbone.

Supporting your child

Reduce activities that trigger pain and keep light activities comfortable. Gentle flexibility work and physiotherapy may help. Most cases settle as growth finishes, although a bony bump may remain.

Symptoms and assessment

Understanding the cause and when to seek help

Who is affected?

OSD often affects active children aged 9-16 during growth, especially those taking part in running, jumping or changing-direction sports. One or both knees can be affected.

Common symptoms

Pain, swelling or tenderness just below the kneecap, sometimes with a bony bump. Running, jumping, kneeling and stairs may aggravate symptoms, which usually improve with rest.

Why does it happen?

The painful area is the growing attachment of the thigh muscle tendon to the shinbone. Sporting loads during growth can irritate this area. It is not an infection.

How is it assessed?

The clinician considers the history and examines the knee. X-rays are rarely needed unless another cause needs to be ruled out. Report how symptoms affect sport and daily movement.

When to seek medical advice

Arrange review for severe or persistent pain, sudden swelling, redness or warmth, reduced movement, or pain that continues despite rest and simple care.

Key message

Reduce activities that trigger pain and keep light activities comfortable. Gentle flexibility work and physiotherapy may help. Most cases settle as growth finishes, although a bony bump may remain.

Exercises and rehabilitation

Activity guided by your child's healthcare team

Before starting activity

Keep stretching gentle and comfortable. A physiotherapist can select strengthening and flexibility work if needed. Do not force movement or push through knee pain.



Activity guidance

Flexibility: gentle quadriceps, hamstring and calf stretches.
Strength: use a programme selected for your symptoms if advised.
Activity: light activity may continue as tolerated.
Loads: reduce running or jumping if painful and take breaks.

Important precautions

Stop movements that increase pain. Seek review for severe or persistent symptoms, sudden swelling, redness or warmth, limited movement, or pain that does not settle with simple care.

Treatment and next steps

Caring for your child and finding support

Managing symptoms

Reduce running, jumping or other painful activities. A wrapped cold pack for 10-15 minutes after activity may help. Ask a parent, pharmacist or clinician about suitable pain relief and age-appropriate instructions.

Support and physiotherapy

Knee pads or a patellar strap may help some children. Gentle stretches for the thighs, hamstrings and calves can be useful. Physiotherapy may be recommended if pain persists or activity is difficult.

Return to activity and outlook

Continue light activity if comfortable, reduce intensity when painful and take breaks. Most recover as growth finishes. A bony bump sometimes remains but rarely causes later problems.

Questions or concerns?

Contact a clinician for severe or ongoing pain, sudden swelling, redness or warmth, limited knee movement or symptoms continuing despite rest and simple measures. Ask for help adapting activity if needed.

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