

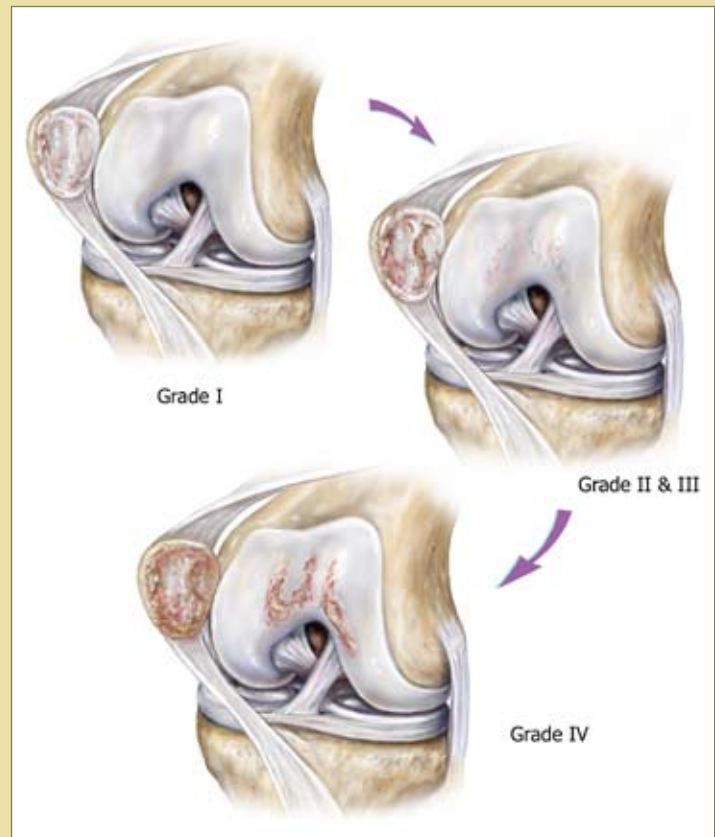


Knee Chondromalacia

Anatomy

The knee joint is comprised of two main articulations. The largest articulation is the point at which the femur (thigh bone) and tibia (shin bone) come in contact. The smaller, but no less important, articulation is where the undersurface of the patella (kneecap) comes in contact with the femur. In a normal knee these surfaces are covered by healthy tissue called articular cartilage. In combination with synovial fluid produced inside the joint, the articular cartilage provides a smooth surface on which the bones can glide. Chondromalacia is a softening and subsequent roughening of these surfaces and results in a decrease of the bones' ability to move freely and without pain.

Knee Chondromalacia



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Line
(651) 842-5200

Appointment Line
(651) 842-5201

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Symptoms

Symptoms of chondromalacia include, but are not limited to:

- Pain that is aggravated by squatting, running and/or jumping.
- Swelling
- Clicking and grinding within the knee.

Symptoms for chondromalacia can be diverse in presentation and severity. The following should only be thought of as a generalization of the symptoms associated with this disorder.



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Diagnosis

The symptoms created by chondromalacia can mimic other diseases of the knee and a thorough physical examination is necessary to determine the cause of your symptoms. X-rays are useful in revealing any abnormalities in the bony anatomy of the knee and can help confirm or eliminate this diagnosis. After your doctor has conducted the examination, they may recommend that you undergo more diagnostic tests such as an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan. An MRI allows your physician to clearly see the ligaments, tendons, cartilage and bones of the knee. This information will help your Orthopedic Surgeon formulate a treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Treatments

After the diagnosis has been made, your doctor will present you with the most appropriate treatment plan. In certain cases physical therapy can alleviate the symptoms and correct the abnormality causing the chondromalacia. Lifestyle and activity modification can also be helpful in reducing your symptoms. If there are specific activities that cause pain or swelling, avoid or keep those activities to a minimum. In more advanced cases a cortisone injection or joint fluid therapy can provide relief from the symptoms.

Cortisone is a very powerful anti-inflammatory steroid medication which decreases the pain and swelling in your knee by inhibiting the inflammatory response. By injecting the cortisone, your doctor can place a high concentration of this medication directly into the joint. If the chondromalacia is too advanced for cortisone to be effective your doctor may wish to try joint fluid therapy.

The knee is the only joint that the FDA has approved for this type of treatment. This medication is injected into the knee in three doses typically spaced one week apart. The substance injected is hyaluronic acid and helps to reduce friction between rough cartilage by cushioning the joint. This treatment can be done every six to nine months if your symptoms warrant it. More information regarding this medication can be provided to you upon your request.

Finally, surgery may be the most appropriate course of treatment. In this case, your Orthopedic Surgeon would perform arthroscopic surgery to remove any loose cartilage in the knee and smooth out the articular surfaces. For further information regarding knee arthroscopy please refer to "Understanding Knee Arthroscopy."

Together with your doctor, you both will agree upon the treatment plan most appropriate for you.

For additional educational materials regarding this topic please visit our website, www.summitortho.com and click on the "Patient Education" quick link at the bottom of the page.

Ice is a convenient and inexpensive treatment option for knee pain. Placing a bag of ice directly on the knee for twenty minutes prevents swelling and inflammation from occurring inside the knee.



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