

Patello-femoral Pain (PFP)

This leaflet offers more information about patello-femoral Pain (PFP). If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is PFP and why have I got it?

PFP is a very common condition that occurs in both males and females of all ages. It is described as pain around the knee cap and can sometimes be called 'anterior knee pain', 'chondromalacia patellae' or 'patella mal-tracking'.

There are many potential contributing factors for developing PFP:

- Excessive loading
- Increase in activity
- Starting a new activity
- Non-supportive footwear
- Weak leg muscles; hip and thigh muscles.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Pain behind, around or under the kneecap.

Pain on activities like walking, going up or down the stairs, running and squatting.

Other symptoms reported can be stiffness, clicking, catching or grinding.

Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

There are no tests for PFP. Diagnosis is usually made on the basis of where the pain is and what makes it worse. A health care professional can help make the diagnosis if you are unsure. Specialist musculoskeletal practitioners such as physiotherapists, sports and exercise medicine doctors and orthopaedic doctors often only see people with PFP when symptoms aren't settling with self-management and exercise.

What treatments are available?

- Exercises to strengthen your leg muscles are shown to be the best treatment for this condition.
- Other treatments like wearing an insole may also assist.

What happens if I do not get treatment?

Your pain may persist for a longer period of time, but often things settle by themselves. If you avoid activity you may get weak.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

- Modify your activities
- Slowly build up your activity levels
- Exercise.

If you are seeing a physiotherapist they will help design a specific exercise programme for you, but we have listed some recommended exercises below. The most important aim with exercise is to restore any strength loss. This is especially important if you have a difference between one side and the other.

Complete the exercises once a day, every other day.

Do three sets of 8-12 repetitions.

Bridge



Step 1:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

Step 2:

Squeeze your bottom and lift your bottom and lower back off the floor.

Hold for 3-5 seconds then slowly lower down.

Hip Abduction



Step 1:

Lie on your side – make sure to swap to exercise both legs.

Keep your legs straight and in line with your body.

Step 2:

Lift the leg up towards the ceiling, keeping the pelvis still.

Hold for 2-3 seconds.

Then slowly lower the leg all the way down.

Squat



Step 1:

Stand with your feet hip width apart

Step 2:

Bend your knees and push your bottom backwards. Don't let your knees come over your toes.

Single leg stand



Step 1:

Stand on one leg for at least 10 seconds. Squeeze your leg muscles for greater control.

Step 2:

Try to build up the seconds you can stand on one leg.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact the MSK physiotherapy team on 020 8812 4018 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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