

# Basics of Bursitis

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In our bodies, the bursa is a sac filled with lubricating fluid, located between tissues such as bone, muscle, tendons, and skin, which decrease rubbing, friction, and irritation. Bursitis is a painful condition that affects these sacs when the bursae become inflamed and is more common in adults, especially in those over 40 years of age. The most common locations for bursitis include the shoulder, elbow and hip, but you can also develop the condition in your knee, heel, and the base of your big toe. The greatest symptom of this condition is pain, but if you have bursitis, the affected joint may feel achy or stiff, hurt more when you move it or press on it, and may look red or swollen.

## What Causes It?

Bursitis is often caused by a repetitive, minor impact on the area, or from a sudden, more serious injury. Age also plays a role, because as tendons age they are able to tolerate less stress, less elasticity, and are easier to tear. Overuse or injury to the joint at work or play can also increase a person's risk of bursitis. Examples include: throwing a baseball or lifting something over your head repeatedly, leaning on your elbows for long periods of time, extensive kneeling for tasks such as scrubbing floors, and prolonged sitting, particularly on hard surfaces. In addition, an abnormal or poorly placed bone joint can put added stress on a bursa sac, causing bursitis. Stress or inflammation from other conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, gout, psoriatic arthritis and thyroid disorders can also increase a person's risk.

## When to See a Doctor

Consult your doctor if you have:

- Disabling joint pain
- Pain for more than one to two weeks
- Excessive swelling, redness or bruising in the affected area
- Sharp or shooting pain, especially when you exercise or exert yourself

## How is Bursitis Treated with Chiropractic Care?

The purpose of treatment is resting the affected joint to protect it from further trauma. Treatment of bursitis can be difficult and so chiropractors can combine, apart from the core spinal/joint manipulation, several different alternative remedies to efficiently manage the condition. Bursitis can be treated in a number of ways. These include, but are not limited to manual therapy (massage or acupuncture), a stretching/rehabilitation plan, therapeutic taping, ultrasound, electric stimulation, nutritional advice or through a prescription for foot orthotics.