

# BURSITIS

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## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Inflammation of bursa, a soft fluid-filled sac that serves as a cushion between tendons and bones. Bursae usually affected are near the shoulders, elbows, knees, pelvis, hips or Achilles tendons.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain, tenderness and limited movement in the affected area with radiation of pain into the neck, arm and fingertips.
- Severe pain with movement of the arm.
- Fever (sometimes).

### CAUSES

- Injury to a joint.
- Overuse of a joint.
- Strenuous, unaccustomed exercise.
- Calcium deposits in shoulder tendons with degeneration of the tendon.
- Acute or chronic infection.
- Arthritis.
- Gout.
- Unknown (frequently).

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- People who are involved in vigorous and repetitive athletic training.
- Exercise or sports participants who suddenly increase their activity levels (“weekend warriors”).
- Improper stretching or overstretching.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid injuries or overuse of muscles whenever possible. Wear protective gear for contact sports.
- Appropriate warm-up and cool-down.
- Maintain a high fitness level.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This is a common, but not a serious problem. Symptoms usually subside in 7 to 14 days with treatment.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Frozen joint or permanent limitation of a joint’s mobility.



## TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- RICE therapy (rest, ice, compression, and elevation of affected joint).
- Apply ice packs to the affected area during a flare-up or after receiving injections in the joint.
- After the acute stage, continued ice treatment (until inflammation subsides) or heat application may be recommended. If you use heat, take hot showers, use a heat lamp, apply hot compresses or a heating pad, or rub in deep-heating ointment.
- Invasive therapy may include aspiration of the joint or surgical excision.

### MEDICATIONS

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- Cortisone injections into the bursa to reduce inflammation may be administered.
- Pain relievers if necessary.

### ACTIVITY

Rest the inflamed area as much as possible. If you must resume normal activity immediately, wear a sling until the pain becomes more bearable. To prevent a frozen joint (especially in the shoulder), begin normal, slow joint movement as soon as possible.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of bursitis.
- Pain increases, despite treatment.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.