

How is it treated?

- **Pain free exercise**

You need to exercise the thigh muscles (quadriceps) in a **pain free** way to improve your symptoms. Your physiotherapist will advise you on what exercises to do. This can be difficult to start with. More activity is encouraged only as strength improves. Too much activity can make the knee worse again.

- **Stretches**

Stretching the tight muscles may be needed to allow better control of the knee cap.

- **Other treatments**

These may include soft tissue massage, strapping and acupuncture.

Anterior knee pain can come and go. To help prevent your pain returning it is advisable to keep your exercises up as suggested by your physiotherapist.

In most cases surgery is not necessary or helpful.

Other sources of information:

www.nhsinform.co.uk
www.nhs.uk

This leaflet was compiled by the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh Physiotherapy Dept in association with the Patient Information Leaflet Group, NHS Lothian Physiotherapy Services, 2014

This leaflet should only be used by specific individuals following physiotherapy assessment. If you have any concerns please approach your physiotherapist.

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Anterior Knee Pain



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A guide for patients

What is anterior knee pain?

This is a general term used for pain at the front of the knee, which can be described in a number of different ways:-

- Patello-femoral pain
- Chondromalacia patellae
- Knee cap pain

It's a common problem that affects up to a quarter of people at some time in their life. It can settle by itself if you change painful activities. Other people find they have good and bad times with their knees.

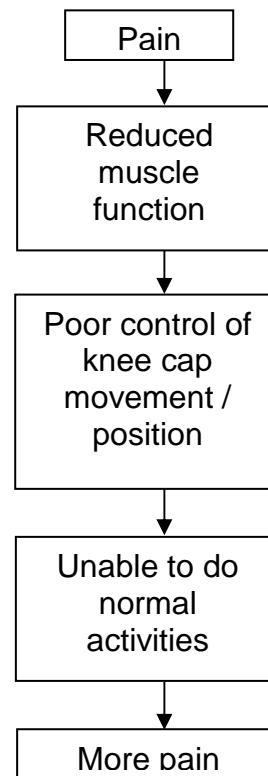
Causes of pain

Normally the knee cap presses against the thigh bone when the thigh muscle tightens.

This pressure will increase the further you bend your knee.

Sometimes the pressure can be increased by:

- Sudden growth spurt as a teenager (growing pains)
- Poor hip / knee strength and poor posture
- Tight muscles
- Increase in your activity, i.e. overuse
- After a fall, injury or surgery



Symptoms

- Pain around the knee cap on:
 - Stairs – going down is often worse than up
 - Lifting / carrying
 - Sitting – for long periods
 - Standing up after you have been sitting for a while
 - Walking – hills can be worse
 - Running
 - Kneeling
 - Squatting
 - Weights and high impact sports

Pain may occur during or after an activity.

- The knee may give way or have a locking feeling on some of the activities listed above.
- Swelling is unusual. As the problem gets worse your pain will increase and your normal activities may become more difficult to do.