

## Patient information

# Bakers cyst

Your ultrasound scan has confirmed that you have a Bakers cyst. This is a cyst behind the knee, sometimes called a popliteal cyst. It takes its name from William Baker, the British surgeon who first described it.

### What is a Bakers cyst?

A Bakers cyst is a fluid filled swelling behind the knee. This excess fluid in the knee joint can cause increased pressure within the joint and a bulge in the lining at the back of the knee. The size of a Bakers cyst can vary, from small to quite large. It can usually be felt behind the knee.

### What causes a Bakers cyst?

- Common conditions such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, can cause the joint to swell and mean that it is more likely that you develop a Bakers cyst.
- Injury or damage to the knee such as cartilage tears.
- Sometimes there is no cause.

### What are the symptoms of a Bakers cyst?

Symptoms of a Bakers cyst can vary and are often related to the size of the cyst, these include:

- Discomfort and pain behind the knee and/or in the calf.
- Difficulty in bending the knee.
- A tight feeling in the leg, which is worse on standing.

There may be no symptoms at all.

Occasionally a Bakers cyst can burst. If this happens you may experience increased pain and swelling behind the knee and down into the calf muscles. If your symptoms worsen then please see your GP for reassessment.

The symptoms of a ruptured Bakers cyst can sometimes be confused with those of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT); however, we can tell the difference by carrying out an ultrasound scan.

## **How is a Bakers cyst treated?**

In the vast majority of cases, no treatment is needed. The symptoms will often resolve over time without any further action. We advise that:

- You keep as mobile as possible.
- You elevate your leg when sitting to help reduce swelling.
- A short course of anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen may help to reduce inflammation. Such medication can be purchased over the counter, without a prescription. Should a longer course be required, you should discuss this with your GP.
- Paracetamol may be beneficial in reducing pain.
- Should your symptoms get worse, or not improve, we recommend that you consult your GP.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your GP or see NHS choices website.

This information leaflet was developed for use in the DVT clinic by the Deep Vein Thrombosis and Anticoagulation Service.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

