

## Patient information

# Patellofemoral pain information for adolescents and parents

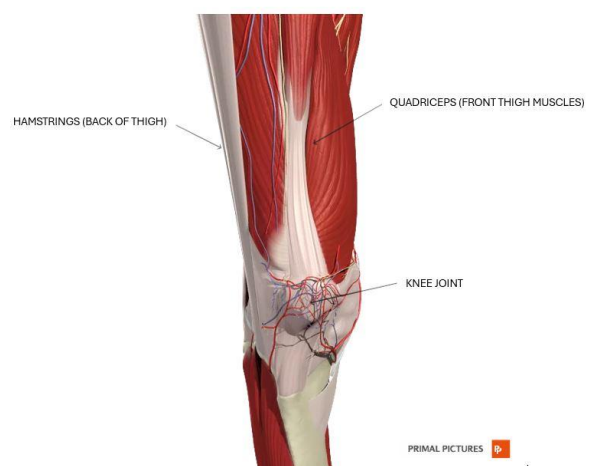
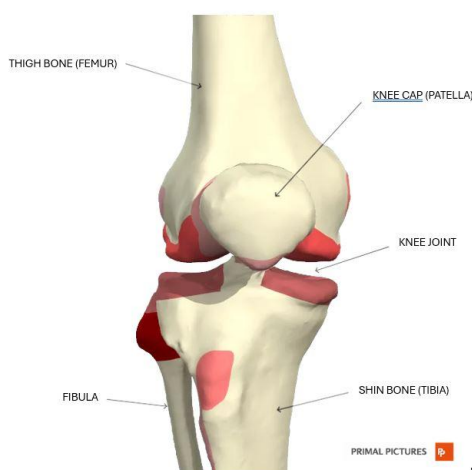
### What is Patellofemoral pain?

Patellofemoral pain refers to pain felt around the knee. It can also be known as anterior knee pain.

### Symptoms:

A broad range of symptoms can be felt with patellofemoral pain. Some of the most common symptoms are listed below:

- Pain on strenuous activities such as running and jumping or going up/down the stairs.
- Pain on walking long distances
- Clicking or a “grinding” sensation within the knee
- Stiffness/pain at rest, or after keeping your knee in the same position - such as prolonged sitting.
- A feeling of the knee “giving way.”



Your physiotherapist will assess your knee and give advice on what is most appropriate to help relieve your symptoms.

### **More flexible joints:**

Having particularly flexible joints can be caused by a number of different things. It can be isolated to one joint or occur in several joints. Here are some of the most common reasons:

1. The shape of the bones whilst growing can allow more movement
2. Low muscle tone, where the muscles are more relaxed around the joint and stretch further
3. If ligaments around the joints are more lax than usual.

### **Management of more flexible joints:**

The stronger your muscles are, the more support and control they will provide your joints, reducing risk of injury. Keeping active in PE or at sports clubs is very important.

### **Causes:**

There can be many reasons for your knee pain. It could be due to one of, or a combination of the most common causes listed below:

- Muscle tightness
- Muscle weakness
- Growing pains
- Having more flexible joints.

### **Muscle Weakness:**

As our bones grow and the muscles stretch and lengthen, they may become weaker as they have to control longer limbs. If some muscles become weaker than others it can result in an uneven pull on the hip and knee which can cause your knee pain.

### **Treatment for Muscle Weakness:**

The weaker muscles need to be strengthened to allow for a more efficiently working knee. Your physiotherapist will advise you on the most appropriate exercises for you specifically.

## **Other common causes of knee pain in adolescents:**

### **Growing Pains:**

When our bones are growing, pain can be caused by irritation of the growth plates, most commonly during exercise, particularly involving running and jumping.

### **Management of Growing Pains:**

The good news about growing pains is that you will grow out of them! There are lots of things you can do to manage your symptoms, so they do not affect your ability to participate in usual activities. These include:

- Exercises - specific to the type of growing pain you have, and should be advised by your physiotherapist.
- Stretches - advised by your physiotherapist, and they should not make the pain worse whilst doing them.
- Using painkillers, which you can speak to your GP or local pharmacist about.
- Use an ice pack (NB. the ice pack should never be directly in contact with your skin, and should not be left on the area for more than 10 minutes).
- Activity modification - you may not need to stop all activities; this could make your knee weaker. It may, however, be appropriate to change the way you participate, or the intensity of the activity. Speaking with PE teachers and sport coaches will be beneficial.
- Maintaining a healthy weight is important as this reduces the stress through the knee joint.

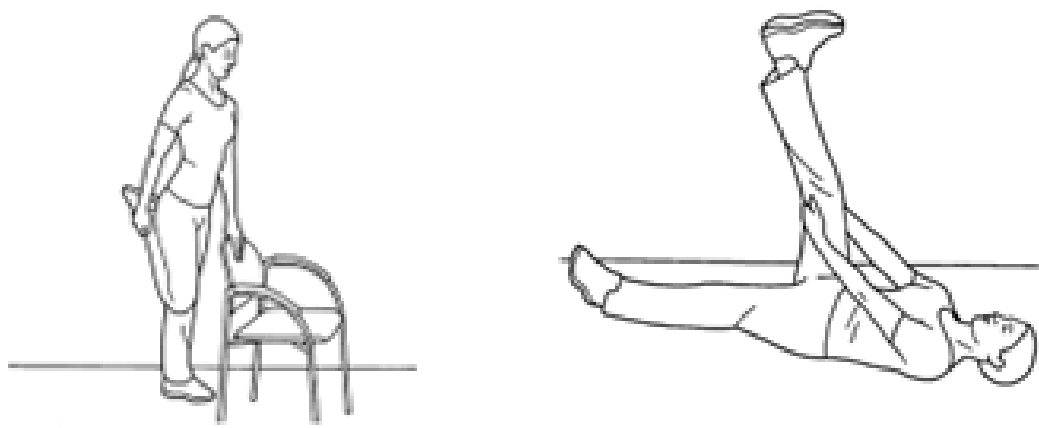
### **Muscle Tightness:**

As we grow, our bones grow faster than our muscles, which can result in the muscles being stretched and they can become “tight”.

Tightness in the hamstrings and quadricep muscles is often a common cause of knee pain, as these muscles are important in the control of the knee joint. If these muscles are tight, it can affect smooth movement of the kneecap and knee joint.

### **Treatment for Muscle Tightness:**

Stretches are a way of increasing your muscle length. Your physiotherapist will give you the best stretching exercises for you specifically if they feel this will help. Two common stretches are:



These stretches are most effective when completed regularly throughout the day and held for 20-30 seconds.

## Summary

Anterior knee pain is very common and will generally go away with no long-term effects. With the correct management, and working with your physiotherapist, your lifestyle should not be affected by your pain.

If the pain resolves and you stop doing your exercises, it is important to remember that the pain may return if you are still growing.

## Further information

If you have any further concerns or questions with regards to your symptoms or treatment, please do not hesitate to contact your physiotherapist, or the Paediatric Physiotherapy Team.

Telephone: 01284 713300

**If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk>**



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