

Patella (Kneecap) Dislocation



Information for Patients

This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about patella dislocations and what you can do to help with your recovery.

What is a patella dislocation?

Dislocation is a medical term to describe when joint surfaces are no longer in contact with each other. For your knee, it will mean that for a time the patella (kneecap) moved away from the groove that it normally sits in. It is primarily a soft tissue injury as it is normally the ligaments and other 'soft' structures (not bone) that are stretched and injured.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: Kneecap dislocations tend to be really quite sore immediately after the injury, however often the pain settles once the joint has been relocated (back in place).

Swelling: After a kneecap dislocation, it is possible for you to notice swelling. You may find the swelling lasts for a long time (possibly into months) and may even still be there when the pain has settled and you are feeling better.

Limited movement: Clicks, pops, clunks and grinds are very normal in all joints, including your knee, and in most cases are nothing to worry about.

Lack of trust: After a dislocation, you may find it hard to trust the knee fully. This is normal and will improve with time and rehabilitation.

What can I do to help myself?

Start using it: Your leg is designed to be used; therefore, it is important to try and get it going as soon as you can. It is likely to be sore but you will not make it worse by using it - in fact, it will help your knee start to get better more effectively. You may need to adjust how you use your leg or how long you do things for in the first stages, but it is something that improves over time for most people.

Get exercising: One of the best things for most aches and pains is normal, confident movement. Your knee may be sore, stiff and swollen after a dislocation and it might feel like the last thing you might want to do is to move it, but movement is the best medicine. You

will not injure it or upset the healing process by moving it.

Do I have to continue using the brace?

If you have been issued a knee brace by the hospital or have sourced one yourself, then you might feel that you need the support for a few days or a week or so, however it is advisable to start to spend some time out of it as soon as you feel comfortable and confident.

Will it get better?

For most people, a patella dislocation will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about patella dislocations or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'patella dislocation'

Exercises



On the bed. Slide your heel towards your bottom and away again.
Complete little and often throughout the day.



Lying on the bed or floor. Lift your bottom off the bed/floor and slowly lower.
Aim to work until your legs tire. Complete little and often throughout the day.



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