CELEBRATION ORTHOPAEDICS

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# Symptom chart for chronic knee pain

**START HERE**

Did the knee pain start suddenly, with an injury, slip, fall, or collision?

- YES → GO TO **FLOW CHART #1** ON ACUTE KNEE PROBLEMS THAT OCCUR ABRUPTLY WITH AN ACCIDENT OR FALL.
- NO → Does your knee appear red or does it feel hot?
  - YES → Are other joints in your body—like your other knee, your finger joints, or shoulder—sore too?
    - YES → Do you have a fever, do you feel sick, or do you have flu-like symptoms?
      - YES → 1. Sometimes joint pain occurs with illnesses such as the flu. The illness can cause joint inflammation and discomfort. If you noticed the flu symptoms before the joint pain, wait a few days to see if the joint discomfort disappears as the flu symptoms resolve. 2. In rarer cases, a fever of greater than 100 degrees accompanied by tenderness in several joints can indicate a bone infection or an attack of rheumatoid arthritis.
      - NO → You may have rheumatoid arthritis, which can make all joints in the body feel sore and tender.
    - NO → You may have an attack of bursitis that is affecting one knee. A bursa sac in your knee joint may be inflamed.
  - NO → Is your knee swollen and sore?
    - YES → Does your knee catch or hurt when you bend your leg?
      - YES → You may have damaged the articular cartilage on the bottom of the femur, tibia, or patella. There may also be a small bone chip causing inflammation. → Try anti-inflammatories, as directed on the bottle, for two days to reduce the chronic inflammation. Restrict activity that causes pain. Call a knee specialist for diagnosis and treatment.
      - NO → Has the knee pain been present for several weeks, seeming to worsen with time?
        - YES → You may have arthritis, which is a progressive disease. → Arthritis is a condition that typically affects people older than fifty. Sometimes it can be inherited. With arthritis, the articular cartilage becomes pitted and rough, making joint movement painful. The range of motion of the joint becomes limited. In addition to knees, the hip joints, shoulders, spine, and fingers are commonly affected. While there is no cure for arthritis, a doctor may prescribe medications to slow the symptoms. Exercise can be helpful in maintaining joint flexibility.
        - NO → Does it hurt when walking or when you put weight on your knee?
          - YES → You may have damaged a meniscus. → Avoid activities that cause a jarring impact, such as running or lateral movement sports like tennis until symptoms resolve.

            Use anti-inflammatories like Advil or Nuprin, as directed on the bottle, for three days to reduce the chronic inflammation.

            If knee pain persists, call a knee specialist. A meniscus tear can require surgery.

Rheumatoid arthritis typically affects adults thirty to sixty. It can make joints feel warm and stiff, especially in the morning. Joints can be painful when touched. The synovium can become inflamed. Over time, the bones in the joint can be damaged. If you suspect that you have rheumatoid arthritis, call your doctor immediately. He or she may take X-rays and blood tests during diagnosis. You may be prescribed anti-inflammatories and other drugs.

WARNING: CONCERNING THE USE ANTIINFLAMMATORY MEDICATIONS: THOSE ON BLOOD THINNERS SHOULD NOT USE THEM, THOSE WITH GASTRIC ULCERS OR GASTRITIS SHOULD NOT USE THEM AND ANY PATIENT ALLERGIC TO ASPIRIN OR OTHER ANTIINFLAMMATORIES SHOULD NOT USE EITHER.

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