



CHADSTONE

REGION

OSTEOPATHY

Bakers Cyst

A baker's cyst, also known as a popliteal or synovial cyst, is a fluid-filled lump or swelling behind the knee.

A baker's cyst usually occurs as a result of joint damage or injury within the knee that causes swelling and inflammation. Examples of these conditions include osteo or rheumatoid arthritis, meniscal or ligamentous tears and gout. This inflammatory response leads to the production of large amounts of synovial fluid which travels to the popliteal bursa (fluid filled sac) which is found behind the knee. This bursa then swells and forms the baker's cyst.

Signs and symptoms of a baker's cyst can include aching, reduced mobility, swelling/tension/feeling of fullness or a visual lump behind the knee. On some occasions, a baker's cyst may cause no symptoms and may be diagnosed through a physical examination or imaging. Occasionally, the symptoms of a cyst may resemble those of a blood clot or a deep vein thrombosis, which are medical emergencies. Your osteopath will monitor for these symptoms however, if you do experience severe increasing pain, redness and swelling in your leg, seek medical care as soon as possible to rule out these conditions.

Most baker's cysts will disappear on their own. However, for those that don't, the first line treatment is conservative:

- Observing the cyst over time, noting if the symptoms increase or the cyst grows larger.
- Activity modification - Any activities that irritate your knee will need to be reduced e.g. running or jumping.
- Using crutches to take weight off the knee.
- Anti inflammatories such as nurofen or voltaren to aid in the reduction of pain and swelling.
- Icing the knee while elevating it helps reduce swelling.
- Hands on therapy to help drain fluid and release surrounding tight muscles.
- Rehabilitation exercises to help strengthen and stabilise the knee to stop/prevent future reoccurrences.

If the cyst does start to grow, aspiration of the fluid may also be an option. This involves inserting a needle into the cyst and draining the fluid.

The second line treatment is surgery. This will be suggested if the first line has been unsuccessful.

Prevention of a baker's cyst developing or coming back is possible. Following these tips, as well as the advice your osteopath has given you will aid in this prevention:

- Warm up and cool down before and after exercising or playing sport

- Wear supportive footwear

Information sourced from: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15183-bakers-cyst> and <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/bakers-cyst-popliteal-cyst/> and <https://msk.org.au/bakers-cyst>

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