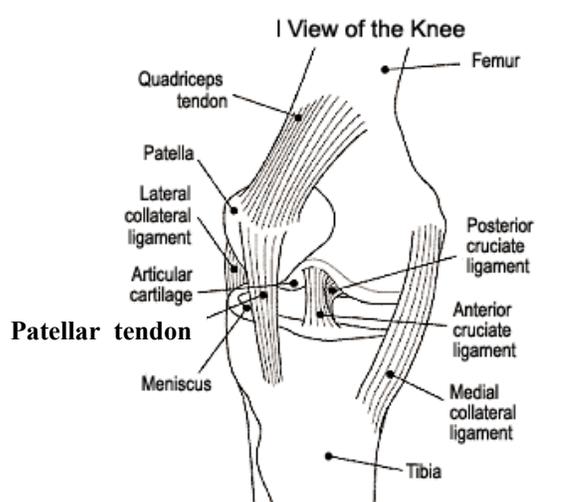


## **Tendonitis of the Knee**

### **What is patellar tendonitis?**

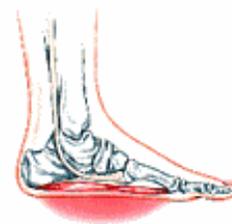
Patellar tendonitis, also called jumper's knee, is inflammation in the band of tissue (the patellar tendon) that connects the kneecap (patella) to the shinbone (tibia).



### **How does it occur?**

The most common activity causing patellar tendonitis is too much jumping. Other repeated activities such as running, walking, or bicycling may lead to patellar tendonitis. All of these activities put repeated stress on the patellar tendon, causing it to be inflamed.

Patellar tendonitis can also happen to people who have problems with the way their hips, legs, knees, or feet are aligned. This alignment problem can result from having wide hips, being knock-kneed, or having feet with arches that collapse when you walk or run, a condition called over-pronation.



The patellar tendon may sometimes tear completely, or rupture, during strenuous activity.

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## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- ◆ pain and tenderness around the patellar tendon
- ◆ swelling in your knee joint or swelling where the patellar tendon attaches to the shinbone
- ◆ pain with jumping, running, or walking, especially downhill or downstairs
- ◆ pain with bending or straightening the leg
- ◆ tenderness behind the kneecap.

If your patellar tendon is ruptured, usually you will have sudden severe pain and you will be unable to straighten your leg or walk.

## How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will examine your knee to see if you have tenderness at the patellar tendon. He or she will also have you run, jump, or squat to see if this causes pain. Your feet will be examined to see if you have a problem with over-pronation. Your provider may order x-rays or an MRI of your knee.

## How is it treated?

Treatment may include:



applying ice to your knee for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 to 3 days or until the pain and swelling go away

taking anti-inflammatory medication or a pain medication prescribed by your health care provider

wearing a band across the patellar tendon, called an infrapatellar strap, or a special knee brace; the strap or brace will support your patellar tendon, preventing it from becoming overused or more painful

wearing custom-made arch supports called orthotics if you have a problem with over-pronation.



If your patellar tendon is ruptured, you will need surgery right away to repair it.

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## **How long will the effects last?**

The effects of patellar tendonitis may last weeks to months. How long it takes to recover depends on the severity of the injury and your willingness to not do things while you are recovering that might make your condition worse.

## **How can I prevent patellar tendonitis?**

Patellar tendonitis is usually caused by overuse during activities such as jumping or running or biking uphill. It can best be prevented by having strong thigh muscles.

The following may also help prevent injury:

When you exercise, wear shoes that fit properly and are right for the activity.

Gently stretch before and after exercising.

Written by Pierre Rouzier, M.D., for McKesson Clinical Reference Systems.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.