

Baker's Cyst



A Baker's cyst is a fluid-filled sac that develops at the back of the knee. It is sometimes referred to as a popliteal cyst.

It is caused by a build-up of fluid in the knee joint. When the knee joint produces excess synovial fluid (which lubricates the joint) it can cause the bursa (fluid filled sac) behind the knee to bulge. This excess joint fluid results in the formation of a Baker's cyst.

What causes a Baker's cyst?

Baker's cysts are relatively common and can be due to anything which causes the joint to swell.

- **Osteoarthritis** (thinning of the cartilage in the joint) is the most common cause.
- **Damage** to the knee cartilage or a knee injury.
- **Rheumatoid Arthritis** which is an inflammatory arthritis caused by the immune system attacking the joints.
- **Gout** which is a type of arthritis where there is a build-up of the waste product uric acid in the blood that can affect the knee joint.

Symptoms

Symptoms include: swelling, tightness and pain causing difficulty moving your knee.

The Baker's cyst itself often does not cause pain or symptoms. The cyst is often visible as a bulge at the back of the knee. It is normally soft to touch.

Treatment

If your Baker's cyst is not causing you any pain, it is not recommended to remove the fluid. This is because more fluid will be produced causing the cyst to reoccur.

If you are experiencing pain related to osteoarthritis, an injection can be given.

Pain killers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can be used to reduce the pain and swelling.

An ice pack may help to reduce swelling further.

There may be an underlying cause of that needs to be treated.

Complications

Rarely, the Baker's cyst can burst causing the fluid to go into the calf. This can cause you pain and swelling and it is best that you seek medical advice.

Prevention

There is no specific prevention for a Baker's Cyst.