

Bursitis

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Bursae are small fluid filled sacs that act as a cushion to reduce friction between two surfaces. They are found most often where muscle and tendons glide over bones. Bursae have a slippery surface that helps to make motions smooth, and without them most movements would be painful.

Bursitis is inflammation of a bursae. When this occurs, the bursa sac becomes swollen and inflamed causing them to take up more space than normal. The surface of the bursa may become less slippery making any movement of this bursa painful.

Bursitis usually results from overuse or prolonged pressure to an area where there is a bursa (for example resting on your elbow for too long, or a job such as vacuuming for hours at a time). You can also get bursitis from a traumatic injury (car accident or fall) or from inflammatory conditions (such as rheumatoid arthritis). Common areas of bursitis are in the shoulder, elbow, hips and knees.

There are ways to prevent bursitis: including taking frequent rest breaks or alternating tasks if you have a repetitive job, and cushioning joints if you are required to put pressure on them such as frequent kneeling. The best way to treat bursitis is to rest and/or relieve pressure from the painful area. Icing will help to control inflammation in the area, as will anti-inflammatory medication. Physical Therapy can help resolve initial bursitis symptoms and instruct you in ways to strengthen muscles so they are more efficient and limit painful motions.