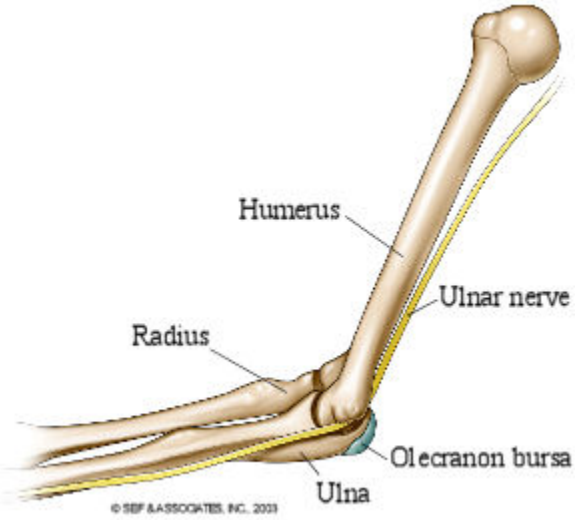
Bursitis, Olecranon

Bursitis is a swelling and soreness *(inflammation)* of a fluid-filled sac (*bursa*) that overlies and protects a joint. Yours is over the elbow and the name for this is Olecranon bursitis. Other common places to get this are the shoulders, hips and knees.



CAUSE

Bursitis can be caused by injury, overuse of the joint, arthritis, or infection.

SYMPTOMS

- Tenderness, swelling, warmth, or redness over the elbow.
- Pain with moving the elbow. This is greater with bending the elbow.
- There may be a squeaking when the bursa is rubbed or moved.
- The bursa may increase in size without pain or discomfort.
- You may develop a fever with increasing pain and swelling if the bursa becomes infected.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the affected area for 15 to 20 minutes each hour while awake for 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
- When resting, elevate your elbow above the level of your heart. This helps reduce swelling.
- Rest the injured joint as much as possible. Continue to put the joint through a full range of motion 4 times per day. When the pain lessens, begin normal slow movements and usual activities.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If conservative treatment does not work, your caregiver may decide to drain the bursa and inject cortisone. This speeds up the healing process.
- Reduce your intake of milk and related dairy products. They may make your condition worse.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your pain increases even during treatment.
- You develop an oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) or as your caregiver suggests.
- You have heat and inflammation over the involved bursa and elbow.
- There is a red line that goes up your arm or leg.
- You develop pain with movement of your elbow.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 03/10/2008 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.