Patellar Fracture In Children

A patellar fracture is a break in the little round bone that is the bump on the front of your child's knee. It is also called the kneecap. Length of times for healing varies. It may take 2 to 6 weeks. Fractures in children heal faster than in adults. An x-ray and examination by your caregiver will show when the broken bone is healed.

CAUSES

A direct blow to the knee causes a broken patella in children. Rarely, a very hard and strong bending of the knee like jumping events in sports can cause a fracture in older children.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis is usually easily made with an x-ray and an examination which reveals tenderness and swelling.

There are multiple growth centers around the patella which can make the diagnosis difficult in older children. A fracture can be hard to differentiate on x-ray from a condition called bipartite patella where the multiple growth centers do not completely come together.

SYMPTOMS

There may be pain, swelling or difficulty moving or walking. Also the knee may have a swollen appearance.

CARE

- Your child will need an x-ray of their patella and knee. A cast, splint or knee immobilizer may be used to keep the knee from moving. Surgery is sometimes needed if the fracture is widely displaced.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Fractures near growth plates are followed closely to make sure growth is not affected.

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