Gluteal Strain

The muscles in your butt (*buttocks, rump*) are called gluteal muscles. A gluteal strain means that the muscles are stretched or have small tears in them. This can cause pain or stiffness in your buttocks. You also might feel pain in your lower back. People with gluteal strain sometimes say they have a "pulled muscles."

Anyone can strain gluteal muscles. It happens often to dancers, runners and other athletes.

CAUSES

Various things can cause gluteal strain. They include:

- Stretching the gluteal muscles too far.
- Putting too much stress on the muscles before they are warmed up.
- Overusing the muscles.
- Getting hit hard on the gluteal muscles (a bruise or contusion).

Gluteal strain is more likely to happen when:

- You are working out in cold weather.
- You are tired.
- You are doing exercise that requires a sudden burst of activity. Sprinting is an example.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain in the buttocks when moving the leg. Sometimes the pain extends into the lower back.
- Tenderness in the buttocks.
- Stiffness or weakness of the buttocks.
- Bruising.

DIAGNOSIS

To decide if you have gluteal strain, a healthcare provider will probably:

- Ask what symptoms you have noticed.
- Ask about your pain. They may ask where the pain is, when it started, and when it occurs.
- Review your overall health.
- Use hands to examine the buttocks muscles.
- Have you do some hip motion exercises. They are called *range of motion* exercises. You will move your leg in specific ways sometimes with the provider pushing against your leg. This will show where the pain is coming from.
- Order a *magnetic resonance imaging* (MRI) scan. This machine uses a magnet and a computer to take pictures of your muscles and tendons. This can help find the cause of your pain. It also may show how severe the strain is. Your strain may be rated:
  - Grade 1 strain (mild): Muscles are stretched. There might be very tiny tears. This type of strain should heal in about a week.
  - Grade 2 strain (moderate): Muscles are partly torn. It may take one to two months to heal.
  - Grade 3 strain (more severe): Muscles are ruptured (completely torn). This is rare with gluteal muscles. A severe strain can take more than three months to heal. A severe stain may require surgery, but this is rare.

TREATMENT

Several treatment methods can be used. Be sure to discuss the options with your caregiver. They include:

- Rest. Take a break from the activity that caused the injury.
- Cold packs. Applying cold to your buttocks may ease swelling and pain.
- Pain medication. Only take over-the-counter medicines for pain and discomfort as directed by your

caregiver.

- Physical therapy. You will work on specific exercises to get the gluteal muscles back in shape. These exercises usually involve stretching. A physical therapist can show you what to do and what not to do as you heal.

PROGNOSIS

Most people recover from gluteal strain with rest and proper treatment. It may take some time to get back to your original level of activity.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Take any pain medication suggested by your healthcare provider. Follow the directions carefully.
- Use cold packs as directed by your healthcare provider or physical therapist.
- If you have physical therapy, follow through with the therapist's suggestions. Be sure you understand the exercises you will be doing, including:
  - How often should the exercises be done.
  - How many times should each exercise be repeated.
  - How long should they be done.
  - What other activities you should or should not do.
- Learn as much as you can about training for your sport or exercise activity. This should help you avoid future muscle strains.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Pain, stiffness or weakness gets worse.
- You have questions about any medications.

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