

Articular Chondral and Osteochondral Injuries



The bones at the knee are covered with cartilage. Damage to this cartilage is known as a chondral injury. If the underlying bone is also damaged, this is called an osteochondral injury.

They generally occur in people under 35 years old, and often in combination with other ligament or cartilage injuries to the knee.

Causes of Injury

High force twisting movements are the most common cause of injury to this cartilage. In most cases, the inside edge of the knee and the back of the kneecap are the most frequently injured areas due to where majority of the load is taken.

Symptoms

- **Pain** may be present at rest and is often made worse by putting weight through the knee. This could be running or weight lifting for example.
- **The knee can give way** if an old injury results in any muscle wasting. This is also present if there is an additional ligament injury.
- **Knee locking** is reported in those with a loose fragment blocking full knee movement.
- **There may be knee swelling.**
- **It may be tender** to press the injured area. Knee movements can also cause pain.
- **A reduction in muscle bulk** is noticeable on the injured leg.

Management

New injuries should be given time to settle to see if the injury will become problematic or not. Rehabilitation will be offered to help restore movement and muscle strength in the knee. If pain continues, an offloader knee brace may be suggested to help you manage your strengthening programme. In few cases surgery may be needed.

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