



ROSENBERG COOLEY METCALF

THE ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC AT PARK CITY

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Patellar Pain Syndrome with Cartilage Softening (Chondromalacia)

DIAGNOSIS: Your **diagnosis** is patellar pain syndrome with cartilage softening (chondromalacia).

INJURY or CONDITION: This **condition** often results from inadequate muscle strength. The patella (kneecap) becomes painful and its cartilaginous undersurface may be softened (chondromalacia). This condition is frequently seen in growing teenagers.

CAUSE: This painful condition may be normal, similar to some headaches. The most probable cause of pain is vascular congestion within your kneecap. Pain may develop as a result of unaccustomed bending (flexion) activities of your knee like hiking downhill.

SYMPTOMS: Typical **symptoms** are pain usually in the front (anterior) aspect of the knee. Pain may be present in both knees. Swelling and stiffness are usually absent.

TREATMENT: Our standard **treatment** options include:

1. Consistent quadriceps strengthening activities, like biking, on a regular basis for 2-4 months before improvement will be recognized.
2. Tylenol and/or anti-inflammatory medication for 2-4 weeks.
3. Weight loss is necessary for patients who are overweight.
4. Topical application of knee balms or circumferential knee wraps/sleeves can help.
5. Long walks are encouraged, especially on level terrain.
6. Cartilage supplementation such as Glucosamine and Chondroitin can be helpful if taken consistently.
7. Physical therapy instruction may be helpful in decreasing pain and providing a good muscle strengthening program.

PRECAUTIONS: Important **precautions**:

1. Surgical treatment is not indicated for this condition.
2. Quadriceps strengthening may actually increase pain during the first two months. Don't give up on your exercise program.
3. Don't panic! This condition is common. It almost always recovers gradually over time.

RECOVERY: Expected **recovery** is six months depending on your adherence to the treatment program.

