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OLECRANON BURSITIS

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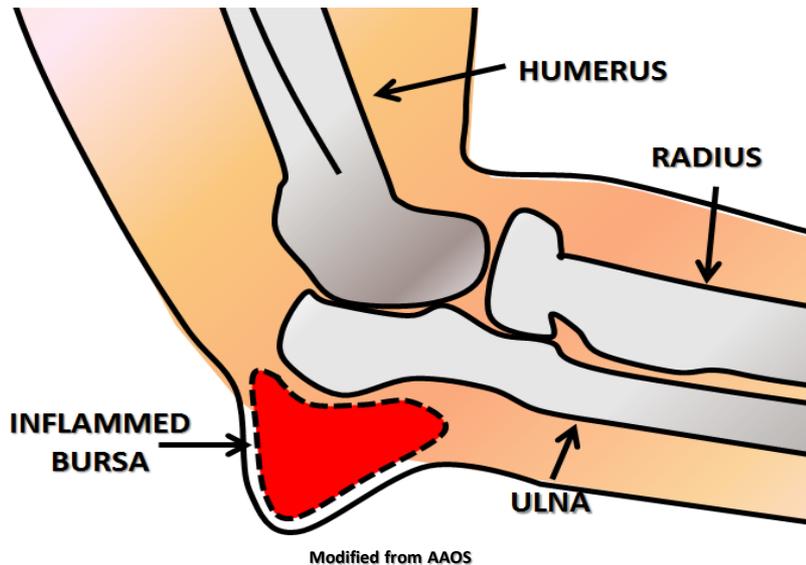
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What is olecranon bursitis?

Bursae are thin sacs that act like cushions between bones and soft tissues. The olecranon bursa lies between the skin and the pointy bone at the back of the elbow. Normally, the olecranon bursa is flat, but if it becomes inflamed, it will swell. Elbow bursitis can occur due to trauma, leaning on the elbow, infection, rheumatoid arthritis or gout. This is common in mechanics, cable installers, plumbers, or HVAC technicians. If an injury at the tip of the elbow breaks the skin, bacteria may get inside and cause an infection. The infected bursa will be red, swollen, and painful, and may produce pus.



What are the symptoms?

- Swelling and pain over the back of the elbow, worse with direct pressure or with bending the elbow
- If the bursitis is infected, the skin becomes red and warm, and you may develop a fever.

What tests will I need?

- **X-Rays:** to rule out any abnormal bone structures that might be causing your symptoms. It is common for people with bursitis to have a bone spur on the tip of the elbow.

How is it treated?

- **Activity modification:** avoid resting your elbow on a hard surface for long periods of time.
- **Elbow pads:** to cushion your elbow.
- **Anti-inflammatory Medications:** reduce swelling and pain.
- **Aspiration:** only if there is an infection, your doctor might sample the fluid with a needle. You will also be given an antibiotic. If the bursa is not infected, aspiration may actually cause an infection.
- **Surgery:** if other treatments do not work, or if there is infection not responding to antibiotics.

What do I need to know about surgery?

- You will be contacted within 2 weeks of your pre-op appointment for pricing and scheduling.
- The surgery will last 45 minutes and you will go home the same day.
- Your surgeon will make an incision that curves around the back side of your elbow
- You will wear a soft dressing that will allow you to move your elbow.
- There are no lifting restrictions after this surgery.
- At your 2 week follow up visit, the sutures and bandage will be removed, and you will begin scar massage.
- You may require occupational therapy after surgery to help restore your range of motion.