

# Patella Dislocation

## Service User Information Leaflet

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## **Introduction**

A dislocated kneecap is a common injury. The kneecap (patella) sits at the front of the knee and runs over a groove in the joint when you bend and straighten your knee. When the kneecap dislocates, it comes out of this groove. This most commonly happens towards the outside of the knee. This can injure the muscles and ligaments at the inside of the knee.

## **Symptoms**

The kneecap often looks to be out of position or at an unusual angle. Often the kneecap will pop back into place quickly afterwards. You may have felt a popping feeling or been unable to straighten your leg after your injury. You may have been unable to walk after your injury. Often the knee is painful and swollen.

## **How does it happen?**

This can happen due to a direct blow. It can also be due to a sudden change of direction while the foot is planted on the floor. Some individual may have conditions that make this more likely such as hypermobility

## **How is it diagnosed?**

Often the kneecap will pop back into place by itself. Sometimes if it hasn't popped back by itself it is necessary to put it back into place at hospital. This is known as a reduction. It may be necessary to have an x-ray at this point to make sure the kneecap is in the correct position.

Other test may be required to decide if any other structures such as ligaments have been injured. They may also be done if you have dislocated your kneecap in the past.

## **How is it treated?**

Often no surgery is needed following this injury. Often you will be placed in a brace for a short period of time while your knee settles down. You may be referred to physiotherapy to help you regain the range of motion and strength around your knee. It usually takes between 6 to 12 weeks to return to your previous activities after a dislocation of your kneecap.

If other structures have been injured or if the kneecap continues to dislocate it may be necessary to have surgery but this is not common.