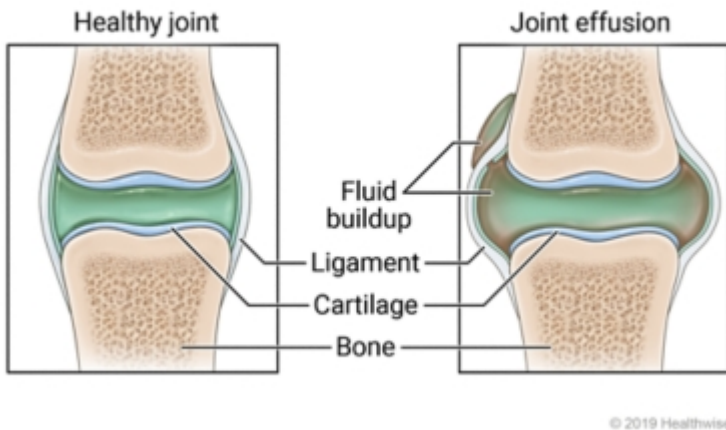


Learning About Joint Effusion



What is it?

Fluid is normally found in joints such as knees, hips, and elbows. When too much fluid builds up around a joint in your body, it's called joint effusion. When you have this problem, your joint may look swollen.

What causes it?

Many things can cause fluid buildup in a joint. It may be caused by a condition like osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or gout. It may also happen because of an infection. Or it can happen because of an injury, like a twisting fall.

What are the symptoms?

You might feel pain when you try to straighten a joint where you have fluid buildup. Your joint may be stiff or swollen.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will do a physical exam. You may need an X-ray. You may need other imaging tests, like an MRI or a CT scan. Your doctor may remove some fluid from your joint to learn more. This is called aspiration. It's done by using a needle to drain fluid from your joint.

How is it treated?

Your doctor may suggest rest, ice, and raising the joint (elevation) to help with pain and swelling. The fluid might be drained from the area. Your doctor may suggest using nonprescription anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or getting a steroid shot. Or you may need surgery to repair damage.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

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