

Baker's Cyst

What is a Baker's cyst?

A bursa is a fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between tendons, bones, and skin. A Baker's cyst is an abnormal swelling of a bursa located in the space behind the knee (the popliteal space). The cyst connects to the membrane covering the knee joint.

How does it occur?

No one really knows what causes Baker's cysts. However, the cysts can occur when the lining of the knee joint produces too much fluid, as in rheumatoid arthritis, or after an injury.

What are the symptoms?

You may have pain, swelling, or a feeling of fullness in the area behind the knee.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will examine your knee and find a bulge in the back of your knee. You may need to have a magnetic resonance image (MRI) or an arthrogram to help the doctor determine if you have a Baker's cyst. For an arthrogram, dye is injected into your knee and then an x-ray is taken to look at the joint cap-

sule, the membrane surrounding the joint.

How is it treated?

The initial discomfort of a Baker's cyst may be treated by wearing an elastic bandage. Your doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatory medications, the cyst may be drained, or an operation may be per-

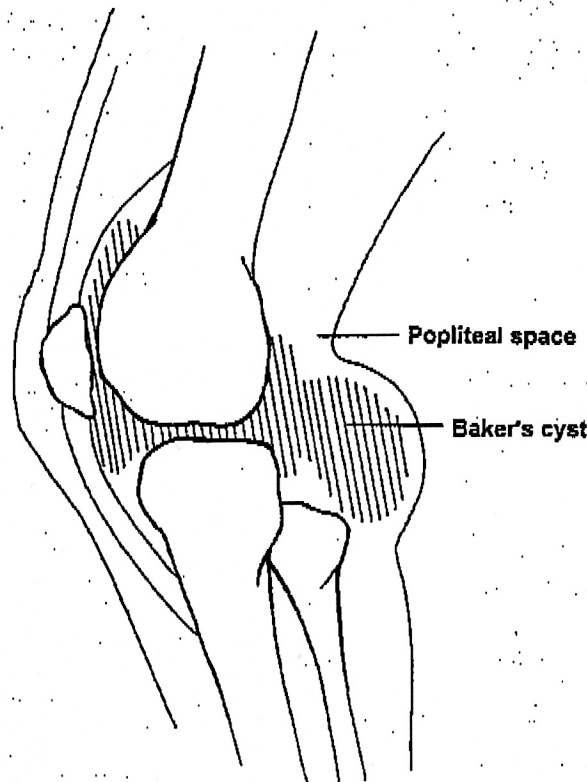
formed to remove the cyst.

Sometimes the cyst goes away on its own. If the cyst does not cause bothersome symptoms, it may not be treated.

How can a Baker's cyst be prevented?

There is really no way to prevent a Baker's cyst from forming.

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Side view of knee