

Loose Bodies

Loose bodies occur when small pieces of bone or articular cartilage break off and float around the knee. These may occur after an injury to the knee or more often without. Because the loose bodies normally get all their nutrients from the fluid within the knee they can slowly grow.

Loose bodies can sometimes be felt as a pea sized hard lump that appears from time to time, they can be pushed around the knee and disappears again.

The other problem that they cause is locking to the knee. This is where the loose body gets stuck between the thigh and shin bone and stops the knee from straightening. Unlocking the knee can be done by resting the knee and allowing the loose body to move on its own or bending the knee and wiggling it to dislodge the loose body.

When the knee locks the loose body can damage the ends of the bones in the knee. Because of this and the nuisance caused by the knee locking removing them is recommended.

Loose bodies are visible on an X-ray if they are made of bone. They will require an MRI Scan to see them if they are not made of bone.



Treatment

The best treatment is to remove the loose body. This is best done at the time of an arthroscopy. This is where a telescope / camera is put into your knee and all the structures within it are checked.

Most arthroscopies only require two cuts in your knee just below your kneecap on either side. Usually when removing a loose body a third cut is made above your kneecap on the outside of your leg. This is often slightly bigger than the other two as it is the one where the loose body is removed through