

# Central Adelaide Orthopaedics – Hip & Knee Service

## Clinical Information Sheet

Clinical Condition	Knee Osteoarthritis
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>Activity related pain in knees; may present as pain in the anterior, posterior, medial and/or lateral aspect of the knee.</p> <p>Patients may also describe that knee pain is radiating up their thigh or down their shin.</p> <p>Pain may or may not have commenced following a trauma.</p> <p>Decreased joint mobility.</p> <p>May have stiffness in affected joint that lasts no longer than 30 minutes.</p> <p>Knee joint may be in valgus or varus alignment.</p> <p>Knee effusion.</p>
<b>Priority</b>	<p><b>Non-Urgent:</b> Osteoarthritis of the knee joint visible on x-ray. Can present on x-ray as loss of joint space, osteophytic lipping, bone on bone.</p> <p>Referrals should be faxed to the RAH on (08) 8222 2751 or the TQEH on (08) 8222 7244.</p>
<b>Differential Diagnoses</b>	<p>Meniscal tear</p> <p>Ligamentous injury</p> <p>Rheumatoid Arthritis</p> <p>Gout</p> <p>Septic Arthritis</p> <p>Fracture</p> <p>Malignancy</p> <p>Knee pain may be a reflection of hip pathology and in some cases, spinal issues causing pain to radiate down</p>
<b>Information required with referral</b>	<p>History:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duration of symptoms</li> <li>• Characteristics of pain – location, night pain, etc.</li> <li>• Response to analgesia</li> <li>• Use of natural anti-inflammatories (e.g. high dose fish oil)</li> <li>• Height, Weight &amp; Body Mass Index</li> <li>• Level of mobility - walking distance; walking aid</li> <li>• Function – ADLs</li> <li>• History of infective processes (e.g. poor dental hygiene, recurrent UTI's, etc.)</li> <li>• Brief medical history</li> <li>• Current medications – in-particular, blood thinning medication</li> <li>• Relevant psycho-social issues</li> </ul> <p>Exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclude hip and back pathology as cause of pain</li> <li>• Confirm origin of pain is from knee</li> </ul> <p>Other medical and allied health practitioners the patient has seen concerning this problem</p>
<b>Investigations required with referral</b>	<p>All patients should be assessed by plain x-ray to establish level of OA</p> <p>X-ray: AP, Lateral knee &amp; patella skyline view</p> <p><i>Upon attendance to appointment, patient will be required to bring plain x-rays (views mentioned above) from within the previous 6 months to establish current bony structure</i></p>



<p><b>Pre-Referral management strategies (information required with referral)</b></p>	<p>Physiotherapy for quad strengthening exercises          Use of simple analgesia as tolerated including a regular paracetamol product (e.g. Panadol® Osteo) and oral NSAIDs if tolerated          Use of natural anti-inflammatories (e.g. high dose fish oil)          Consider hydrotherapy, swimming or cycling for a low-impact exercise alternative          Use of mobility aids (e.g. walking stick or frame)          Weight loss measures – A BMI &lt;40 is preferable for surgery (due to significantly increased complication rate associated with higher BMI's. Decision will be at surgeon's discretion.)          Use of self-care aids (e.g. raised furniture, toilet seat raiser, pick-up stick, etc.)          Home modifications (e.g. hand rails and/or ramps)</p>
<p><b>Discharge Criteria/information</b></p>	<p>For discharge to GP if non-operative management to be pursued.  <b>Red flags</b> that should trigger referral back for review: pain in affected joint no-longer managed non-operatively</p>
<p><b>Fact sheets</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au/images/stories/documents/info_sheets/2013/OsteoArthritis.pdf">http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au/images/stories/documents/info_sheets/2013/OsteoArthritis.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.orthoanswer.org/knee-leg/knee-osteoarthritis/definition.html">http://www.orthoanswer.org/knee-leg/knee-osteoarthritis/definition.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.myjointpain.org.au/factsheets/knees/">https://www.myjointpain.org.au/factsheets/knees/</a></p> <p><a href="http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00212">http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00212</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+weight/healthy+weight+loss+tips">http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+weight/healthy+weight+loss+tips</a></p>

## For more information

**Central Adelaide Orthopaedics – Hip & Knee Service**  
 Royal Adelaide Hospital, North Terrace ADELAIDE Telephone: 08 8222 4000  
 The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 28 Woodville Road, WOODVILLE Telephone: 08 8222 6000