



## Olecranon Bursitis

**What is a bursa?** A bursa is a fluid filled sac that occurs in areas of the body that require the skin or tendons to glide. Common places are the elbow (olecranon), the knee (patellar) and the shoulder (rotator cuff).

**What is olecranon bursitis?** The name means inflammation of the olecranon bursa. It is generally referred to as any swelling on the posterior elbow.

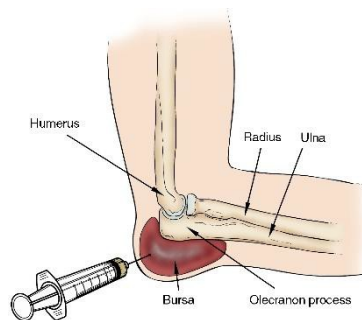


### What are the causes of olecranon bursitis?

1. **Trauma**-the elbow is injured, and there is bleeding into the bursa. This will cause a fluid filled sac. Prolonged pressure can do the same.
2. **Inflammatory state**-those with Gout or Rheumatoid Arthritis can get inflammation of the bursa.
3. **Infection**—Any inflamed or fluid filled bursa can become secondarily infected.

### How is olecranon bursitis treated?

1. Any non-infected bursa can be treated with use of an elbow sleeve and possibly an aspiration. Often an aspiration is needed to diagnose infection or gout. Steroid injections have no role in treatment of olecranon bursitis.



AAOS-*JF Sarwark, ed: Essentials of Musculoskeletal Care, ed 4. Rosemont, IL, AAOS, 2010.*

2. A chronic bursa or one that has been infected before is usually treated with surgical excision. This requires use of a splint followed by an elbow sleeve for three to four weeks.
3. In the case of an infected bursa, the infection must be controlled. This requires antibiotics and immobilization. This can sometimes require hospitalization and emergent surgery combined with strong antibiotics.