

**STEVEN CHUDIK MD**  

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**SHOULDER, KNEE & SPORTS MEDICINE**

## **Bipartite Patella**

The patella is a sesamoid bone on the front of the knee that articulates along the front of the femur, protects the knee from impact, and is part of the tendon of quadriceps muscle. It is responsible for straightening the knee, and standing and jumping. Bipartite patella is a condition where the cartilaginous centers of growth fail to fuse during development to form a single complete bony patella. It can occur in one or both knees. Bipartite patella is commonly asymptomatic and considered a normal variant. However, in a small percentage of patients, often following trauma, movement of the bipartite fragment can cause pain and limitations.



X-ray showing unfused patella

### **Frequent Signs and Symptoms**

- Tenderness around your kneecap
- Pain when extending the knee
- Swelling around the patella
- A bony ridge near the outer edge of the patella
- Feeling that your knee is unsteady



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### Etiology (Causes)

- Cartilage growth centers of the patella fail to fuse together
- Trauma and injury can destabilize the bipartite fragment resulting in pain with activity

### Outcomes

Patients with this condition are rarely symptomatic. When they are, they typically respond excellently to treatment.

### Treatment Considerations

Initial treatment consists of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, elevation of the leg, rest and ice to relieve pain and reduce swelling. Wearing a knee brace can also alleviate pain. Physical therapy is also a treatment option. If the condition is painful and does not respond to conservative treatment, surgical excision or repair of the bipartite fragment may be necessary.

### Possible Medications

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen (**DO NOT** take within seven days before surgery), or other minor pain relievers such as acetaminophen that often also are often recommended. Take these as directed by your physician. Contact your physician immediately if any bleeding, stomach upset, or signs of an allergic reaction occur.
- Your physician may prescribe narcotic pain relievers for severe pain Use only as directed and only as much as you need.

### Notify My Office If Symptoms Worsen

