

### **What is a Baker's Cyst?**

The term Baker's cyst is used to describe a fluid filled swelling behind the knee. It can be a bursa (a simple sac filled with fluid) or a swelling arising out of the knee joint. If they are connected to the knee joint they can expand to form a very large swelling. Occasionally, if the Baker's cyst bursts this can give increased pain and tenderness as the fluid leaks into the tissue around the calf, causing the calf to become swollen and painful. A baker's cyst can then sometimes be confused with a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the calf.

### **What causes a Baker's cyst?**

The cause of a Baker's cyst is not always clear but it can be associated with arthritis of the knee joint.

### **What is the treatment?**

A support stocking and elevation of the leg may help. Your own doctor can prescribe anti-inflammatory tablets to reduce pain and inflammation. If symptoms are severe a steroid injection into the knee may be recommended and you may be referred to a rheumatologist or orthopaedic surgeon. Surgery to remove the cyst is rarely necessary.

**(John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford – for review May 2005)**