



Knee Arthroscopy Frequently Asked Questions

What is knee arthroscopy?

Arthroscopy is a type of minimally invasive surgery used to access joints. Knee arthroscopy requires two small “poke-hole” incisions in the front of the knee to access the knee joint. Using a 4 millimeter camera and arthroscopic instruments, the entire knee can be evaluated and common knee problems can be treated.

What does meniscus surgery involve?

The knee contains two “shock absorbers” called the medial and lateral meniscus. The meniscus helps to dissipate load within the knee. The meniscus frequently tears, which can cause pain, clicking, popping, and occasionally locking of the knee. The meniscus has poor blood supply, so these tears often do not heal. Meniscus tears can be treated by *removal* or *repair*. Because the meniscus has poor blood supply, many meniscus tears cannot be repaired. When this torn portion of the meniscus is removed, pain and other symptoms can improve. Repair is used in younger patients with “simple” tears of the meniscus that allow sutures to be placed across them. Occasionally, repair is also performed for “root tears”, which occur where the meniscus inserts into the bone.

Quick Facts:

- The ACL critical for the stability of the knee
- ACL tears can lead to meniscus tears and arthritis
- ACL reconstruction is the surgical treatment for symptomatic ACL tears
- There are several graft options for ACL reconstruction
- Recovery: ~4-6 weeks in a brace, ~3-4 months until joggin, ~1 year to return to sports
- Physical therapy is essential!

What are the differences between the treatment types?

Meniscectomy

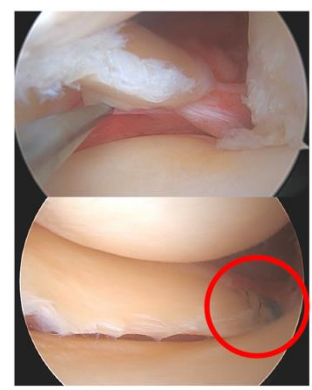
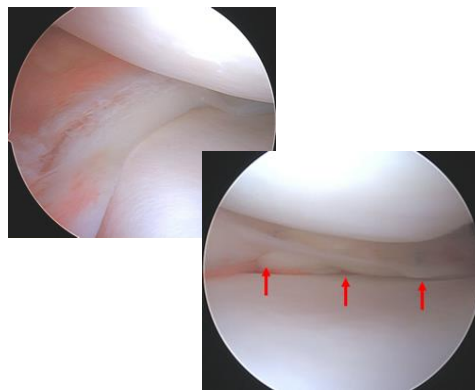
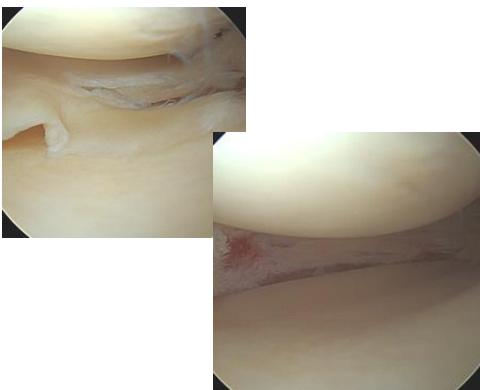
- *Removal* of the torn meniscus
- Does NOT reduce the risk of arthritis in the long term
- No brace after surgery
- Patients may put full weight on the leg and move the knee after surgery
- 6 week total recovery

Meniscus Repair

- *Repair* of the torn meniscus
- Reduces risk of arthritis
- Successful in 80-85% of cases
- Brace after surgery
- Patients may put full weight on the leg, but motion is restricted
- 4-6 month total recovery

Meniscus Root Repair

- *Repair* of the torn meniscus root
- Reduces risk of arthritis
- Extra incision in the knee
- Brace after surgery
- Patients put NO weight on the leg for 6 weeks and motion is restricted
- 4-6 month total recovery



What does the day of surgery involve?

Knee arthroscopy is an outpatient surgery and is typically performed at the surgery center or at the hospital. Patients will receive information from the facility the day before about when they should arrive. When you arrive for surgery, pre-operative nurses will prepare you by cleaning and shaving your knee. You will be brought back for surgery and will receive a general anesthetic. This is important to make sure that you are fully relaxed and asleep during surgery. Any movement during surgery could result in injury to your cartilage or other structures in the knee.

After surgery, your restrictions depend on the type of surgery performed. You will be given 2 medications post-operatively. One is a pain medication, which can be used as the nerve block is wearing off. Patients should wear off of this medication as they are able to. The second is baby Aspirin (81 mg tablets), which is a mild blood thinner. It should be taken to minimize the risk of blood clots post-operatively: twice per day for 2 weeks, starting the morning after surgery.

What is the post-operative recovery?

Post-operative rehabilitation is dependent on the type of surgery that was performed. If only a debridement, or partial meniscectomy, is performed then the expected recovery is approximately 6-8 weeks. If a meniscus repair is performed, the expected recovery is approximately 4-6 months. A brace is used post-operatively if a repair was performed. Physical therapy is essential regardless of which meniscus procedure was performed. Physical therapy helps to optimize your knee function post-operatively by recovering your range of motion, reactivating your muscles, and improving your strength and agility.



Important Contacts:

Surgery Scheduler: Amber Stegall 775-785-3432
Medical Assistant: Itzel Perez 775-333-7865

The MyChart patient portal can also be used to contact Dr. Curtis or Itzel Perez