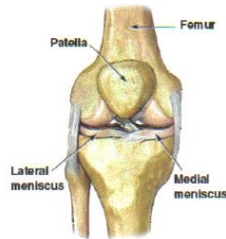


Meniscus Tear

What is the meniscus? The meniscus is cartilage located in the knee. There are two present in each knee. They are thick “C” shaped pads that sit on the top of the lower leg bone called the tibia.

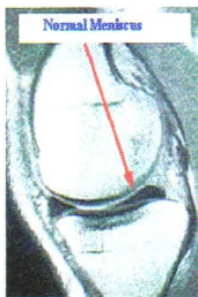


Why are the menisci important? Menisci add to the stability of the knee. They act as cushions in the knee to decrease stress and prevent the development of degenerative arthritis. Menisci lubricate the knee by aiding in the normal movement of joint fluid.

What causes the menisci to tear?

A tear can result from a sudden traumatic injury such as a twisting action of the knee. Tears can also occur without significant trauma. In these cases, a tear may be due to repeated small injuries to the cartilage or degeneration of the tissue in older patients.

MRI of Normal and Torn Meniscus



Diagnosis

What are symptoms associated with a tear?

There is usually pain along the inner or outer side of the knee. Mild to moderate swelling will accompany the pain. Clicking, catching or locking of the knee may also be present. The history and physical exam can usually make a diagnosis but x-rays are taken to rule out fractures. An MRI may be used to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

Nonoperative: Minor tears will respond to rest, anti-inflammatory medications and physical therapy. Therapy usually follows three phases.

*Phase I: control of pain and inflammation, icing, stretching and anti-inflammatory medication

*Phase II: restore strength and function

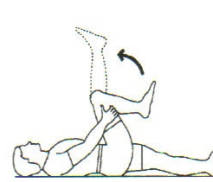
*Phase III: Return to work or sports

Operative: If the non-operative treatment is not successful, arthroscopic surgery may be needed to remove or repair the torn cartilage.

Prevention

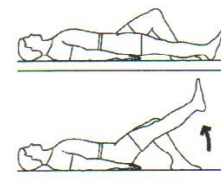
*Maintain strong and flexible muscles around the knee

Sample Exercises



Hamstring Stretch

Lie on your back, holding knee from behind and pulling toward your chest.
Gently straighten leg.
Hold stretch 30 seconds.



Straight Leg Raise

Lie on back with uninvolved knee bent.
Raise straight leg to height of opposite bent knee.
Perform 3 sets of 10 reps