

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Injury

What is the ACL?

- It is a strong ligament in the middle of the knee.
- It stops the thigh bone (femur) and shin bone (tibia) from moving too much on each other.

How do I know if my ACL is ruptured?

- The History and Examination of the knee often make the diagnosis.
- Investigations include an X-ray (may show avulsion fractures) and an MRI (often to look for associated injuries).



Normal ACL on MRI



90 Ruptured ACL on MRI

Classic History

- Twisting knee injury
- Heard a pop
- Felt a clunk
- Could not play on
- Knee swelling within 4 hours if injury
- Severe Pain
- Knee gives way

Do I need Surgery?

It depends on your

- Lifestyle
- Type of work
- Activity Level
- Symptoms of instability
- Associated injuries

Why reconstruct?

- The ACL does not tend to heal itself. It is within the knee joint and the joint fluid prevents healing.
- A new ligament must be reconstructed using another tendon or artificial ligament (LARS Ligament)
- If you play pivoting sports or have symptoms of instability in daily life consider ACL reconstruction.

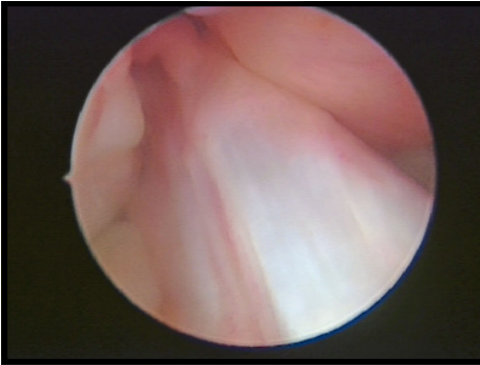
Benefits of Surgery?

- Provide knee stability
- Prevent further damage to the knee
- Return to sport
- Return to physical work

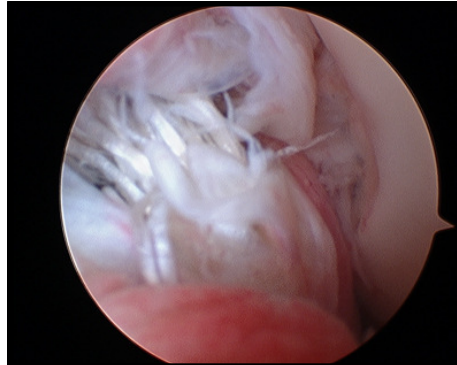
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When should I have my ACL reconstruction ?

- This is individualised to each patient.
- In general—Early reconstruction (within 6-8 weeks) better than late reconstruction (greater 6 months).
- In general - When swelling reduced.
- - When you knee motion is improving.



Normal ACL on Arthroscopy



Ruptured ACL

Which graft should I have?

The graft needs to be individualised for each patients specific goals and needs.

Specific Risks of surgery: are all relatively small

- Infection
- Deep Vein Thrombosis
- Excessive bruising and swelling
- Joint stiffness
- Graft Failure 5-10%
- Numbness
- Nerve or vessel damage
- Donor site problems
- Hardware Problems
- Residual Pain and swelling

Graft Types

- Hamstring tendons
- Patella Tendon
- Quads tendon
- Allograft
- Artificial graft (LARS)

Recovery Guidelines

- Crutches 10-14 days
- 6 weeks driving
- 3 months jogging
- 6 months sport specific training
- 9-12 months return competitive sport

Physiotherapy

- Important aspect to recovery
- 12 month commitment
- Your physio will be your guide
- My Guidelines (<http://myorthopod.com.au/acl-reconstruction-rehabilitation.html>)

