

# Patient Education Guide

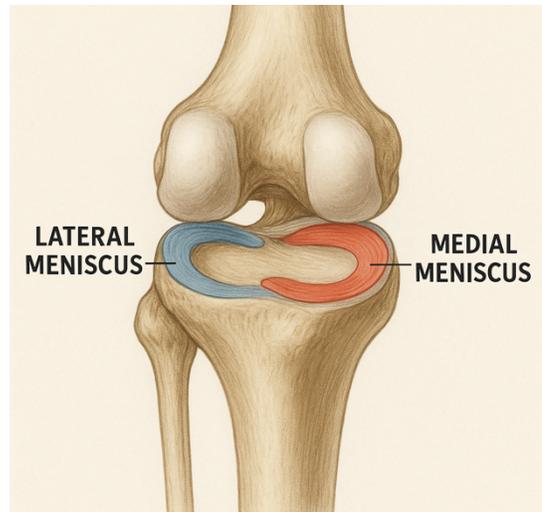
## ACL Tear and Reconstruction

### WHAT IS THE ACL?

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is a structure in the center of your knee that is critical for stability. It keeps the knee stable with translation front to back and from rotation. It is often injured or torn from a twisting and pivoting type injury. When it tears there can also be a tear to the medial (inside) or lateral (outside) meniscus. Sometimes there is also an injury to the cartilage in the knee.

Not every ACL tear needs surgery. Once the initial pain from the injury improves you may be able to return to some of your activities. However, the knee at is an increased risk of further damage if there is another twisting or pivoting injury. Reconstruction of the ACL is the best way to restore stability to the knee.

ACL surgery involves reconstructing the torn ligament. This can be done with cadaver tissue or by taking part of your own tendon. Dr. Mathur will discuss the pros and cons of each option with you during your appointment.



### HOW IS AN ARTHROSCOPIC SURGERY PERFORMED?

Dr. Mathur performs ACL reconstruction surgery arthroscopically. *Arthroscopy* is a minimally invasive surgery that involves multiple small incisions around the joint. A camera and small instruments are placed through the incisions and displayed on a high definition monitor. This minimally invasive approach leads to less postoperative pain, faster healing, and faster recovery.

During the surgery he will remove and reconstruct the ACL. He will also evaluate the meniscus and cartilage and trim out or repair it depending on what it looks like. The postoperative protocol will depend on in there is also a meniscus repair during the ACL reconstruction. Dr. Mathur will discuss both with you during your appointment and make the final decision during the surgery.

## WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

### BEFORE SURGERY

- Our office will contact you to book your surgical date, preop appointment, and first post op appointment.
- At your preoperative appointment you will be given a prescription to being physical therapy. Set up your first PT appointment for 2-4 days after the surgery.
- You will receive a call from preadmission testing. They will set up your preop labs and go through which medications to take and bring.
- The hospital will call between 1-5pm the day before your surgery to give you an arrival time and tell you if your surgery will be in the main building or in the ambulatory surgery pavilion (ASP).
- You may need medical clearance from your primary care doctor or cardiologist.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery. You may take some sips of water with medicine.

### MORNING OF SURGERY

- Arrive at the hospital at your instructed time.
- A family member or friend is allowed to come with you to help with the check in process and there is an area for them to wait while you are in surgery. You will require someone to take you home if you are leaving the same day of surgery.
- Dr. Mathur will meet you in the preoperative area to answer any questions and go through the plan.
- You will meet the surgical assistants and nurses that will be in the operating room.
- You will meet the anesthesia team, and they will go over their plan which often includes a nerve block to help with pain after surgery.

### AFTER SURGERY

- Most patients will go home the same day of surgery.
- For the first few hours after surgery, you will be in the recovery unit where a nurse and the anesthesia team will monitor you and manage your postoperative pain.
- Once you are awake and comfortable you will be allowed to go home with a family member or friend.

- Keep your bandages clean and dry. This may require using plastic wrap or taking sponge baths.
- You may change your bandages if they get dirty. We will change them at the first postoperative appointment.
- Keep your brace on at all times. It is ok to remove it to sleep and to shower.
- Stay on a constant pain medicine regimen. The effects of the nerve block wear off 12-24 hours after surgery, and it is important to stay ahead of the pain.
- Read your discharge instructions from surgery for details on what you are and are not allowed to do after surgery.

#### **FOLLOW UP AND PHYSICAL THERAPY**

- Your first follow up appointment is usually 3-7 days after surgery.
- At this visit we will check your incision and take X-rays.
- You should already have your first physical therapy appointment scheduled to be 2-4 days after surgery.
- We will book your next postoperative appointment which is usually 4-6 weeks later.