



## Meniscus Tear

A torn meniscus is a common cause of knee pain, swelling, and a sense of catching. The tear is often caused by a twisting injury but not infrequently the exact event will not be known. The majority of the meniscus has no blood supply, so the tear will not usually heal on it's own. The majority of the meniscus also has no nerve endings, so the meniscus itself is not painful, but changes in pressure to the adjacent bone and joint lining cause the sense of pain.

A separate group of meniscus tears (meniscus root avulsion) has fairly recently been identified. Due to the dramatic change in mechanics of the knee with these tears (suddenly the knee functions as if there is no meniscus at all) the rapid development of arthritis will often subsequently occur.

### Treatment:

- Meniscus tears that cause continued pain and inability to return to the same level of activity as prior to the injury warrant intervention.
- You may have heard of others stating they had their meniscus “repaired”. In reality, most meniscus tears currently cannot be repaired, but instead the torn area is cut out (partial meniscectomy) to decrease the joint irritation causes by the mobile fragment.
- On rare occasion, especially in younger individuals the tear will occur close to the lining of the joint, and in these cases, a true “repair” will be performed.
- Meniscus root avulsions may be treated surgically, or with attempt to unload that area of the knee with a brace.

### What is typical with surgery?:

Partial meniscectomy (cutting out the torn area performed arthroscopically)

- Surgery for the meniscus is outpatient (home the same day). The procedure itself usually takes 30-40 minutes, longer if additional procedures to address other issues are needed.
- Even though you will be able to put weight on your foot immediately after surgery, you should have a pair of crutches to use for a couple of days (so you don't fall) as you thigh muscles can be weak and fatigue easily after surgery.
- Pain medication is usually needed only the first couple days after surgery. Most patients are able to return to work in a couple of days with the exception of individuals who perform heavy manual labor in which case a couple of weeks is normal. Most individuals are able to return to sporting activity within a month.





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LOWER EXTREMITY SPORTS MEDICINE

*Foot, Ankle and Knee Reconstruction*



## Meniscus repair

- If a meniscus repair is performed (instead of a partial meniscectomy), the recovery is significantly longer. A limitation of knee motion is usually prescribed during the first 6 weeks (in a brace). Impact and sporting activity are typically prohibited the first 4 months after a repair.

## Meniscus root repair

- Remember, this is a separate entity than most meniscus tears, and while it can be seen with an ACL tear, it is often associated with early arthritis. Surgery will partially depend on the amount of arthritic change present. Debridement of the torn meniscus can be performed to decrease catching symptoms. Repair of the meniscus root can be performed with a technique that differs from the techniques used to repair other meniscus tears.

**If you think you have a meniscus tear, or have been diagnosed with a meniscus tear and are wondering about treatment options, schedule an appointment with Dr. Feinblatt**

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