



Knee Arthroscopy

What is a knee arthroscopy?

- Arthroscopy is a procedure that lets your doctor do surgery inside a joint without making a large incision. A scope is used to assist with any repairs or cleaning of the joint. The incisions will be closed with sutures. The incisions leave scars that will fade with time.

There are multiple types of knee arthroscopies including:

- **Meniscus surgery:** Removes or fixes the cartilage between the bones in the knee. When a meniscus tears, your knee may be painful, swell, get stiff, or lock up. Small tools may be used to remove the damaged parts of the meniscus. This is called a **partial menisectomy**. In some cases, the tear can be sewn back together (**Meniscus repair**). If it's not able to be repaired, it may be removed completely.
- **Chondroplasty/debridement:** Arthroscopic cleaning and shaving of the loose cartilage in the knee joint.
- **Lateral release:** Procedure used to help realign the kneecap. The kneecap moves up and down in a groove on the end of the thigh bone as the knee bends. By doing a release we hope to provide better tracking of the kneecap in this groove.

What happens on the day of surgery?

- Surgery will take approximately 1 hour.
- Your leg will be bandaged and raised. You may have a brace to limit motion. How long you wear this brace will be determined by the surgery performed.
- You will go home after 1-2 hours in the recovery room.
- Be sure you have someone to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours.
- You should not drive until you are cleared by a healthcare provider to do so. You should no longer be taking pain medications and be able to react easily before driving.

Immediate Post Op:

- Limit standing and walking for the next 24 hours to decrease swelling
- After general anesthesia, a sore throat may be experienced. Drink cold fluids, chew ice chips, or use throat lozenges to help relieve discomfort
- To reduce swelling and pain, put an ice or cold pack on your knee 10-20 minutes at a time. Do this every few hours. Put a thin cloth between the pack and your skin.
- Blood tinged "watery" drainage is normal.

Your Recovery:

- You will feel tired for several days. Your knee will be swollen and you may have numbness around the incision. Most of this will go away in a few days.
- Keep leg elevated on pillows above your heart level when resting to reduce swelling and pain.
- You may move leg as tolerated.
- You may bear weight as tolerated with crutches as needed.

- Practice quadriceps muscle tightening, straight leg raising and ankle pumping exercises 10-15 times, 3 times a day.
- You may take off the dressing in 3 days. Apply adhesive bandage over wounds and change daily if drainage. Otherwise it is ok to keep incision open to air.
- You may shower in 3 days once the dressing has been removed. Wash incisions with antibacterial soap and pat dry. Do not take a bath, use a hot tub, swim, or soak your leg until sutures or staples are removed.
- Take medicine as directed.
- **Pain medications can make you constipated. Use over the counter Colace (docusate) or Miralax (polyethylene glycol) or your choice of stool softener/laxative.**
- No sports, running, excessive stair climbing or squatting until you are released by the physician.
- If you smoke, we strongly encourage you to stop. Smoking slows your body's ability to heal.
- Your knee will slowly get stronger as you recover. You may be able to return to regular activities within a few weeks. You should be able to return to light work in 1-2 weeks depending on your surgery and type of work you do.
- You may need therapy after surgery to help rebuild your strength and motion of the knee.

Call the doctor if:

- Pain does not get better after taking pain medicine
- Inability to urinate
- Loose stitches or incision comes open
- Incision bleeds through large bandage
- Increased sign of infection: pain, swelling, warmth, redness, drainage, red streaks from incision fever, chills
- Increased sign of blood clot: pain in your calf, back of the knee, thigh or groin, redness and swelling in your leg or groin.
- **IF YOU EXPERIENCE CHEST PAIN AND/OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING, CALL 911.**