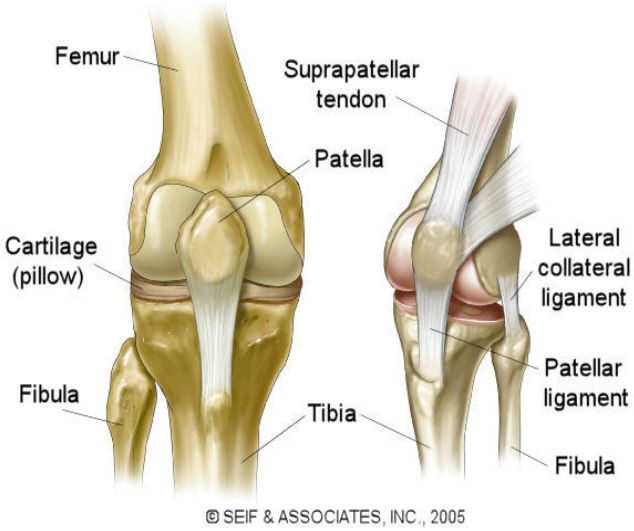
Wear and Tear Disorders of the Knee
(Arthritis, Osteoarthritis)

Everyone will experience wear and tear injuries (*arthritis, osteoarthritis*) of the knee. These are the changes we all get as we age. They come from the joint stress of daily living. The amount of cartilage damage in your knee and your symptoms determine if you need surgery. Mild problems require approximately two months recovery time. More severe problems take several months to recover. With mild problems, your surgeon may find worn and rough cartilage surfaces. With severe changes, your surgeon may find cartilage that has completely worn away and exposed the bone. Loose bodies of bone and *cartilage*, bone spurs (excess bone growth), and injuries to the *menisci* (cushions between the large bones of your leg) are also common. All of these problems can cause pain.



For a mild wear and tear problem, rough cartilage may simply need to be shaved and smoothed. For more severe problems with areas of exposed bone, your surgeon may use an instrument for roughing up the bone surfaces to stimulate new cartilage growth. Loose bodies are most often removed. Torn menisci may be trimmed or repaired.

ABOUT THE ARTHROSCOPIC PROCEDURE

Arthroscopy is a surgical technique. It allows your orthopedic surgeon to diagnose and treat your knee injury with accuracy. The surgeon looks into your knee through a small scope. The scope is like a small (pencil-sized) telescope. Arthroscopy is less invasive than open knee surgery. You can expect a more rapid recovery. After the procedure, you will be moved to a recovery area until most of the effects of the medication have worn off. Your caregiver will discuss the test results with you.

RECOVERY

The severity of the arthritis and the type of procedure performed will determine recovery time. Other important factors include age, physical condition, medical conditions, and the type of rehabilitation program. Strengthening your muscles after arthroscopy helps guarantee a better recovery. Follow your caregiver's instructions. Use crutches, rest, elevate, ice, and do knee exercises as instructed. Your caregivers will help you and instruct you with exercises and other physical therapy required to regain your mobility, muscle strength, and functioning following surgery. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the wound.
- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- You develop an unexplained oral temperature above 101.5° F (38.6° C), or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- You have severe pain with motion of the knee.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.

- You have any allergic problems.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 04/07/2004 Document Re-Released: 11/30/2009
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