

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Injuries

With football season quickly approaching, the doctors of The Orthopaedic Clinic are preparing to take their places on sidelines across the region as sports medicine providers for the majority of the high schools in the area. One injury that they see all too often during this season is injury to the anterior cruciate ligament or ACL. While no one likes to see an athlete get injured, thankfully the experienced and qualified surgeons at The Orthopaedic Clinic are there and have provided local sports medicine care for over 30 years...getting countless athletes back on the field after these injuries.

The ACL is one of the most commonly injured ligaments of the knee. The incidence of ACL injuries is currently estimated at approximately 200,000 per year, with 100,000 ACL reconstructions performed each year. In general, the incidence of ACL injury is higher in people who participate in high-risk sports such as basketball, football, skiing, and soccer.

The anterior cruciate ligament can be injured in several ways:

- Changing direction rapidly
- Stopping suddenly
- Slowing down while running
- Landing from a jump incorrectly



- Direct contact or collision, such as a football tackle

When you injure your ACL, you might hear a “popping” noise and you may feel your knee give out from under you.

Other typical symptoms include:

- Pain with swelling.
- Loss of full range of motion
- Tenderness along the joint line
- Discomfort while walking

- Knee giving way

If you have injured your knee, the Doctors at The Orthopedic Clinic will closely examine you, obtain x-rays and often an MRI to diagnose an ACL tear. You may require surgery to regain full function of your knee.

After a complete ACL tear, some patients are unable to participate in cutting or pivoting-type sports, while others have instability during even normal activities, such as walking. There are some rare individuals who can participate in sports without any symptoms of

instability. This variability is related to the severity of the original knee injury, as well as the physical demands of the patient. A torn ACL will not heal without surgery, but nonsurgical treatment including bracing and physical therapy may be effective for patients who are elderly or have a very low activity level.

The vast majority of patients require surgical reconstruction of the ACL and have long-term success rates of around 90%. The goal of the ACL reconstruction surgery is to prevent instability and restore the function of the torn ligament, creating a stable knee. This allows the patient to return to sports when there is no longer pain or swelling, when full knee range of motion has been achieved, and when muscle strength, endurance and functional use of the leg have been fully restored. This process often takes up to 9 months.

Whether your treatment involves surgery or not, rehabilitation plays a vital role in getting you back to your daily activities. A physical therapy program will help you regain knee strength and motion.

The surgeons at The Orthopaedic Clinic have years of experience in treating elite athletes and weekend warriors with ACL injuries and are offering the latest and greatest in surgical and non-surgical options and techniques. Come see us today for a consultation! ■



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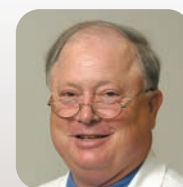
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