

Surgical Patient Education

Knee Arthroscopy

What is a Knee Arthroscopy?

A knee arthroscopy is a surgery to look at the inside of the knee joint and repair any damage.

The surgeon uses a small tube with a light that is placed through small incisions. The surgeon uses different tools within these tubes to repair any damage.

Arthroscopy is commonly used to treat a range of problems, such as damaged cartilage, torn ligaments, loose fragments, and inflamed joints.



What are the Risks?

- **Infection** - There is always a risk of infection when you make surgical cuts to the skin, this is minimal with a knee arthroscopy because arthroscopy is the treatment for infection.
- **Bleeding** - There is a risk of bleeding as with all surgical incisions/procedures. It does not happen often with knee scopes but bruising and swelling are normal, even bruising down the knee can be normal. Your dressing after surgery will look like there is a lot of bleeding because a lot of water is used during the case.
- **Damage to blood vessels or nerves** - The knee has blood vessels and nerves the surgeon works around that can get damaged but this is rare.

What happens during the procedure?

- This is usually an outpatient procedure which means you will go home the same day.
- You will arrive to the surgery center and go to Pre-op and be checked in.
- You will then be taken to the operating room and will be placed on monitors and watched closely and you are put to sleep.
- After you are asleep, the surgeon will make an incisions to your knee and perform the arthroscopy.
- Your skin will then be sutured closed and gauze and a large bandage will be placed over the knee. You will be woken up and when you are stable you will go home, usually within 1-2 hours.

Before Surgery

- You may be asked to stop certain medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen, be sure to check with your surgeon's office and anesthesia to see what medications to stop.
- You will be asked not to eat or drink the night before surgery, it is important to follow these instructions.
- You will be asked to shower the night before or morning of surgery.
- You need to arrange help at home in preparation for surgery. You will need to do minimal activity for 3 days and then slowly increase your activity level.

After Surgery

- You will have a bulky dressing to your knee afterwards that you will change that night.
- If you shower, use a waterproof dressing or bandage to cover your dressing to your knee so it does not get wet.
- You may be given a prescription for medication for pain, sometimes the can also be over the counter. It can be important to take the medicine as prescribed and alternate the medicine to get maximum pain control.
- Ice and compression are the most effective ways to treat your pain after surgery. Use the ice as long as it decreases your pain.
- Keep your foot elevated as much as possible. This will make you more comfortable and decrease the risk of a blood clot.
- Rarely will you need to attend Physical therapy. This is only needed when the muscle actually cut.

Recovery After an Knee Arthroscopy

How long will I be out of work?

- Recovery with a knee arthroscopy is much faster than with open surgery.
- But you should prepare to be off work for a possibility of up to **4-6 weeks** if your job requires heavy work/lifting.
- The recovery may be shorter or longer and you can sometimes go back to work within a few days depending on your job and activities performed at your job.
- You will be able to walk and do light activity immediately. You can put your full body weight on your leg that was operated on.
- You usually **DO NOT** need physical therapy or crutches afterward.
- No running for 4 weeks or until your surgeon says it is okay.
- You will have sutures in your knee, these will come out after 2 weeks.