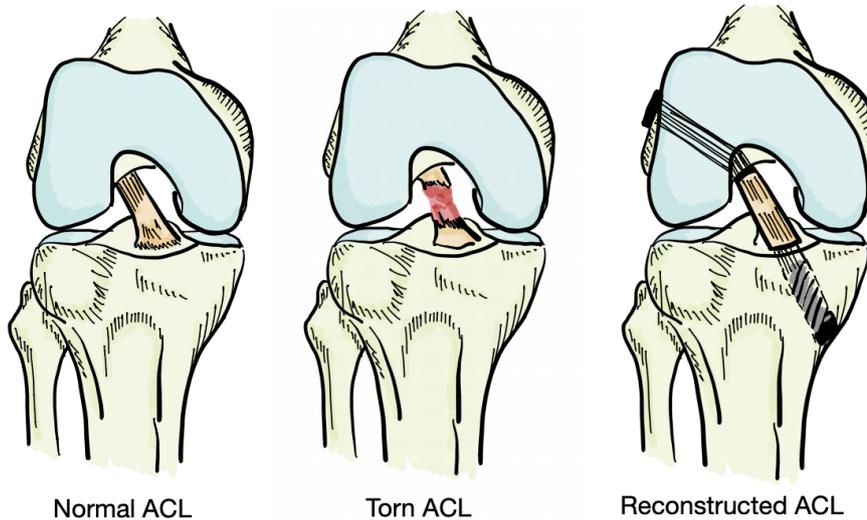


ACL Injuries

Injuries to the ACL are common in Australia. They are usually as a result of a twisting injury playing sport but may also occur from an awkward fall, accident or workplace injury. The ACL helps to provide stability to the knee. After an ACL injury you may have pain when walking and the knee may not bend or straighten out fully. It is important that you see a surgeon and physiotherapist soon after the injury to check for other knee conditions.

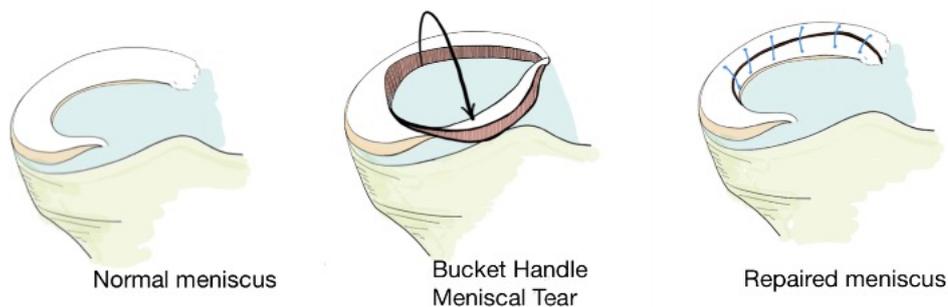
If you are active, enjoy sport and have instability in the knee following an ACL tear then surgical reconstruction of the knee is often advisable. Non-surgical treatment can be successful and involves a rehabilitation program with dedicated physiotherapists.

Some tears can be serious and can involve damage to other parts of the knee. These may require surgery to reconstruct the ACL and repair the damaged areas of the knee. People with significant ACL tears may experience instability of the knee and swelling.



Dr Stevens will assess the movement of the knee and will likely order an MRI scan if this hasn't been done already. If reconstruction is advisable, then surgery to replace the torn ACL with a graft is organised. The graft can come from several different places and Dr Stevens can discuss the options with you.

If the ACL tear is associated with a meniscal tear, Dr Stevens can discuss fixing the tear by placing sutures in to hold the meniscus in place, usually through keyhole surgery. If the meniscal tear cannot be fixed then the torn portion of the meniscus are smoothed over through keyhole surgery.



What to expect after surgery:

If you and Dr Stevens decide that surgery is the best option for your ACL injury, you will stay in hospital overnight following your surgery. You can be discharged the next day with pain relief - take the pain relief tablets for two to three of days as you need them.

You will have a dressing on your surgery site and a bandage which needs to stay clean and dry for 14 days.

You can move your feet and hip straight away, but the dressing on the knee will prevent it from moving too much.

After 2 weeks you will have an appointment with Dr Stevens to have your wound checked, any stitches will be removed. Dr Stevens will then give you advice on exercises and physiotherapy.

Physiotherapy is strongly encouraged to help the knee move and to regain strength. Do not start this until you have had your appointment with Dr Stevens at 2 weeks.

There are risks with surgery. These include infection, knee pain and stiffness, graft rupture and failure to get back to high end sport. Arthritis may occur in the future as a result of the damage caused by the injury. Dr Stevens will discuss the risks of surgery with you.