

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Knee Injuries

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Injuries, that is taking care of them are a way of life to an Orthopaedic Surgeon such as myself. Injuries are not the happiest part of my practice, but they are an important part.

Injuries are unique because they are obviously unexpected and very unwelcome. In this discussion we are talking about knee injuries, but it applies to all others too. As an Orthopaedic Surgeon I am the last person the patient had expected to see when they woke up that morning. The patient is hurting, upset, worried and sometimes angry. Multiply this by several family members.

Talk about the doctor (me) starting out in a hole! But I know this of course, and accept it as part of my job.

I hope that you are picking up on how I write these articles in a way to give you a personal inside perspective on what we are talking about. I don't want to present a few facts about a subject that any non doctor medical writer could do.

In case you didn't know, most of the medical information you read is from medical writers who are good at what they do, but they are not Orthopaedic Surgeons and have no clinical experience or perspective.

When I see a patient with an injury the first thing that has to be done is to figure out what is going on. Understanding what happened is the key. Then comes the exam and x-rays. Knee injuries are very common as you can imagine.

ACL

Might as well start with the one everyone has heard of and "thinks" they know the most about.

"He blew out his knee." Not a very accurate diagnosis, but that's what everybody calls it.

It is the pencil shaped ligament inside the knee toward the front. Lots of things can tear or rupture the anterior cruciate ligament in sports or any activity. Hyperextension is a common mechanism. The patient usually feels a pop and within hours the knee becomes very swollen. MRI is standard to confirm the diagnosis. If the ligament is

completely torn, surgery will usually be needed to reconstruct it, but it depends on the person's age and how unstable the knee is with a less than normal ACL. Surgery may not be needed in every case.

PCL

The posterior cruciate ligament is like the ACL in structure. It is located deep in the knee behind the ACL. It is injured much less than the ACL and does not require surgery as often as the ACL. For this reason you don't hear nearly as much about it.

Collateral Ligaments

There are two in the knee. One is medial and one lateral. They are important stabilizers of the knee. Complete tearing is possible, but mostly they are stretched or partly torn and require splinting, rest and crutches. This injury is the typical "knee sprain" and surgery to repair them is definitely unusual.

We are not out of knee injuries, but we definitely are out of time for this week. Next week we'll cover the rest of the more common injuries we see.

For much more information about knee injuries and all the things I treat in the office and hospital log onto the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush