



## Meniscus Tear

Meniscal tears are the most common knee injuries. The menisci are two wedge-shaped pieces of cartilage that act as “shock absorbers” between your thighbone and shinbone. They are tough and rubbery to help cushion the joint and keep it stable. Athletes, particularly those who play contact sports, are at risk for meniscal tears; however, anyone at any age can tear a meniscus. Older people are more likely to have degenerative meniscal tears. Cartilage weakens and wears thin over time. Aged, worn tissue is more prone to tears. Just an awkward twist when getting up from a chair may be enough to cause a tear, if the menisci have weakened with age.

The most common symptoms of meniscal tear are:

- Pain
- Stiffness and swelling
- Catching or locking of your knee
- The sensation of your knee "giving way"
- You are not able to move your knee through its full range of motion

Without treatment, a piece of meniscus may come loose and drift into the joint. This can cause your knee to slip, pop or lock.

Along with the type of tear you have, your age, activity level, and any related injuries will factor into your treatment plan. If your tear is small and on the outer edge of the meniscus, it may not require surgery. As long as your symptoms do not persist and your knee is stable, nonsurgical treatment may be all you need.

This includes:

- Rest
- Ice
- Compression
- Elevation

**Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines** like Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, and Aleve reduce pain and swelling.

If your symptoms persist with nonsurgical treatment, your doctor may suggest arthroscopic surgery (surgical removal of the torn part of the meniscus).

Important Numbers: