

KNEE PAIN

Due to Trauma



WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY KNEE?

Trauma may cause injury to one of the following structures in your knee:

Ligaments: Support the joint and may become stretched or torn (sprained).

Meniscus: The medial and lateral are disc type structures deep in the knee joint which may become torn with trauma.

WHAT WILL I FEEL?

Ligament Injury: A lot of pain at the time of injury. The knee may swell during the first 12 hours following the injury. You will experience pain with walking, twisting, stair climbing, bending and straightening the knee.

Meniscal Injury: You may or may not experience much pain at the time of injury. You may have felt a “pop” in the knee joint. The knee may take up to 24 hours to swell. You may feel catching or locking in the knee. You will feel tenderness along the line of the joint on one side. You may have pain when you squat, run, climb stairs or twist on the leg.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?

Ligament Injuries/Sprains are graded I-III. Grade I and II sprains are very painful but will heal in a few days up to 6 weeks. Your health care provider will do motion tests to determine how severe the sprain is.

Meniscal Injuries can take greater than 6 months to heal. In most cases it is better to let these injuries heal naturally. Surgery may be needed for large tears that cause locking or instability in the knee.

DO I NEED AN MRI?

A physical exam of your knee is usually all that is needed to determine the extent of the injury. If your health care provider believes your injury may require surgery, they will recommend a referral to an orthopedic specialist. The orthopedic specialist will determine if further diagnostic tests are needed.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

If you experience any of the following:

- Locking of the knee joint.
- Complete giving way of the knee when walking.
- You are following the guidelines listed and are unable to decrease the swelling.
- You are ready to progress your exercise program for return to sports.



KAISER PERMANENTE

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

- **RICE** – **R**est **I**ce **C**ompression **E**levation
Ice **15-20** minutes every 2 hours as long as there is pain and swelling. Continue to Ice 2X/day as long as you have pain or stiffness. Stay off of the leg and elevate on pillows as much as possible to control the swelling.
- **Knee Brace** – Depending on the severity of the injury, a knee brace or ace bandage may be recommended for the first 3 weeks.
- **Cane/Crutches** – may be recommended to decrease weight bearing on the joint and allow you to walk without limping.
- **Medication** - Talk to your health care provider or consult the *Healthwise Handbook* about anti-inflammatory medication. It may take 10-14 days for you to notice the benefit.
- **Supportive Shoes** – with good arch supports and cushions. Avoid high heels. Avoid standing or walking on cold concrete surfaces for prolonged periods.
- **Exercise** - Do the exercises listed below to maintain range of motion and decrease pain. Do the exercises only when you are able to do them without increasing your pain.

MOVEMENTS TO IMPROVE MOBILITY AND EASE PAIN

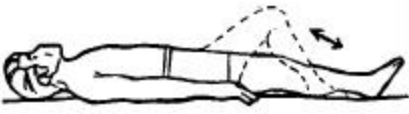


Gentle range of motion can help to reduce swelling and stimulate healing

Do all exercises at least 3 times per day – 5 to 20 repetitions each.

All exercises must be done **PAIN - FREE**. Feeling a stretching or pulling sensation is OK.

Stop doing any single exercise if it immediately increases your pain.

If you have increased **pain that lasts more than 1 hour** after finishing the exercises, you need to decrease the number of repetitions of each exercise.

<p>Heel Slides – Lying or Sitting. Slide heel toward buttock, then back to a straight position</p> 	<p>Stationary Bike (Start 2-3 weeks after injury – as tolerated) Adjust bike so the leg is Nearly straight when down. Begin with no/low resistance. Begin with partial circles, Then progress to full circles. Begin with 5 minutes, work Up to 20 minutes as able.</p> 	<p>Isometrics - Contract the muscles on the front and back of your thigh. Do this in different knee angles in sitting. 70,90,100 degrees 5X/day, 5Reps each, 5 sec. holds</p> 
<p>Ankle circles</p> 