



Dr Stuart MacKenzie



Torn Meniscus Explained

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KNEE CARTILAGE

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What is a meniscus?

A meniscus is a type of cartilage inside your knee. Each of your knees has a medial meniscus on the inside and a lateral meniscus on the outside.

What does the meniscus do?

The two menisci in your knee have a number of important functions.

- They act like a shock absorber helping to distribute the forces between the bones in your knee
- They work with the ligaments of your knee to help keep your knee stable
- They stop the smooth articular cartilage on the end of the bones from having too much pressure applied to it

How does the meniscus get torn?

There are 2 common ways a meniscus can be torn.

The first and most common type of meniscus tear is called a degenerative tear. This type of tear is due to wear and tear on the knee over a long period of time. Patients with this type of tear will also have arthritis in their knee.

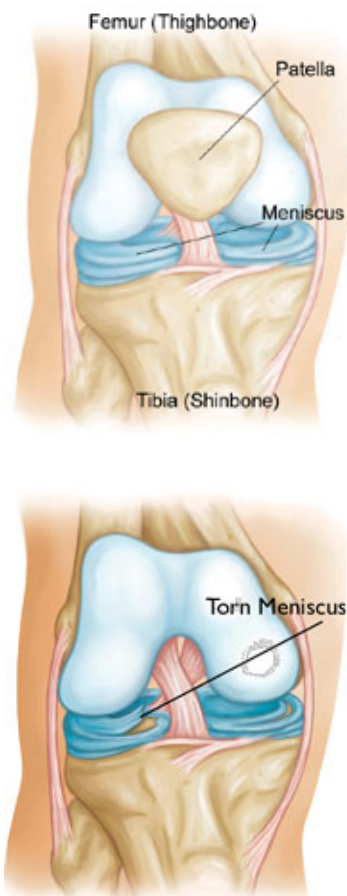
The other common type of meniscus tear is a traumatic tear. This is the result of an injury to the knee. This is most commonly a twisting injury which may happen playing sport, at work or in day to day life. Sometimes traumatic meniscus tears are associated with ligament injuries, particularly injuries to the ACL (anterior cruciate ligament).

How is a meniscus tear treated?

The treatment of a meniscus tear depends on the tear. Some meniscus tears won't have any symptoms and don't need any treatment. Some degenerative meniscus tears that are associated with bad arthritis may need to be treated with knee replacement surgery.

Between these two extremes, meniscus tears can be treated with arthroscopy, sometimes called keyhole surgery. Only a very small percentage of meniscus tears are able to be repaired because the meniscus cartilage has very limited ability to heal. Most of the time, the torn area of meniscus is removed leaving behind as much normal meniscus as possible.

Most patients return to completely normal function after having an arthroscopy for a meniscus tear.



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FIND OUT HOW MENISCUS REPAIR CAN BENEFIT YOU

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