

ACL Injuries

Baylor SportsCare

We'll give you a healthy advantage.

Baylor SportsCare provides the winning combination of education, prevention, medical coverage and sports medicine for athletes of all ages.

- Access Baylor Health Care System specialized sports medicine physicians* and services throughout the Metroplex
- Medical coverage at games and events utilizing physicians, nurses and licensed athletic trainers
- Educational programs on injury prevention & performance enhancement
- Comprehensive medical support for groups, teams and individuals

For more information about SportsCare, or for help in finding a physician who is right for you, contact your local SportsCare representative at

(972) 512-7404

or call **1-800-4BAYLOR** and ask for "Baylor SportsCare"

*Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor University Medical Center or Baylor Health Care System. CE 12.07

Definition

An ACL injury is the over-stretching or tearing of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in the knee. A tear may be partial or complete.

Causes

ACL tears may be due to contact or noncontact injuries. A blow to the side of the knee, which can occur during a football tackle, may result in an ACL tear. Coming to a quick stop, combined with a direction change while running, pivoting, landing from a jump, or overextending the knee joint (called hyperextension), also can cause injury to the ACL. Basketball, football, soccer, and skiing are sports which have a high rate of ACL tears.

Symptoms

Early symptoms:

- A "popping" sensation or sound at the time of injury
- Knee swelling within 6 hours of injury especially into the calf
- Pain, when you try to put weight on the injured leg

Those who have an ACL injury may notice that the knee feels unstable or seems to "give way" when walking on it.

First Aid

An ACL injury should be treated with:

- Taking weight off of the injured limb
- Elevating the joint (above the level of the heart)
- Ice
- Pain relievers such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like ibuprofen)

Do NOT play again until you have been evaluated and treated. Some people may need crutches to walk until the swelling and pain have improved. For mild injuries, your doctor may suggest physical therapy in combination with a brace to help you regain joint motion and leg strength. For more severe injuries your doctor may recommend surgery to reconstruct the ACL. The typical recovery timeframe is around 6 months.

DON'Ts

- In the case of a serious knee injury, do NOT try to move the joint. Use a splint to keep the knee straight until a trained medical professional has evaluated it.
- Do NOT return to play until you have been evaluated and treated.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Anyone with a serious knee injury should seek medical attention for x-rays and evaluation. If the foot is cool and blue after a knee injury, the knee may be dislocated, and blood vessels to the foot may be injured. This is a true medical emergency that requires immediate professional help.