

Knee Arthroscopy

KEY POINTS

- Knee arthroscopy is joint surgery done with a scope used to see the inside of your knee through several small cuts in your skin.
 - This procedure is used to find the cause of pain, swelling, tenderness, or weakness in your knee and repair any damage to the knee.
 - Ask your provider how long it will take to recover and how to take care of yourself at home.
 - Make sure you know what symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them.
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What is knee arthroscopy?

Knee arthroscopy is joint surgery done with a scope used to see the inside of your knee through several small cuts in your skin.

When is arthroscopy used?

If your knee joint is unstable or if you have other serious knee injuries, you may need this surgery right away. Usually, it is used when you have tried medicines, physical therapy, and changing your activities, and you continue to have symptoms.

- It may be used when X-rays and other tests, such as an MRI or CT scan, have not found the cause of your pain.
- It may be used to find the cause of pain, swelling, tenderness, weakness, or locking in your knee and to repair damage to the bones, cartilage, tendons, ligaments, and other structures.
- It may be used to help with ongoing treatment.

You may need this procedure on your knee:

- To wash the joint and collect tissue, fluid, or pus samples for culture, which means testing in the lab for bacteria or other germs to help your provider choose the right medicine to treat an infection
- To remove small bits of loose bone, cartilage, or other damaged tissue such as the lining in the joint (synovium)
- To shave small rough areas of bone or cartilage that are causing pain with knee motion
- To repair connective tissue (fascia) that may be too tight or too loose for proper joint motion
- To repair damaged ligaments
- To repair certain types of bone fractures

- To repair or remove damaged meniscus tissue, which is a certain type of knee cartilage
- To transplant tissue, from another part of your body or from a tissue donor, to replace damaged cartilage

How do I prepare for this procedure?

Arthroscopy following an injury in which your knee joint was pierced by a knife, bullet, branch, metal spike, or another pointed object may be an emergency procedure, and there may be no time to prepare. If you do have time to prepare before the surgery, do the following:

- This surgery is usually an outpatient procedure, which means that you may be able to go home the same day or the day after surgery. Talk to your healthcare provider about where you will have your surgery.
- Make plans for your care and recovery after you have the procedure. Find someone to give you a ride home after the procedure or when you leave the hospital. Allow for time to rest and try to find other people to help with your day-to-day tasks while you recover.
- You may or may not need to take your regular medicines the day of the procedure. Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines and supplements you take. Some products may increase your risk of side effects. Ask your healthcare provider if you need to avoid taking any medicine or supplements before the procedure.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have any food, medicine, or other allergies such as latex.
- Your healthcare provider will tell you when to stop eating and drinking before the procedure. This helps to keep you from vomiting during the procedure.
- Follow your provider's instructions about not smoking before and after the procedure. People who smoke may have more breathing problems during the procedure and heal more slowly. It's best to quit 6 to 8 weeks before surgery.
- Follow any other instructions your healthcare provider gives you.
- Ask any questions you have before the procedure. You should understand what your healthcare provider is going to do. You have the right to make decisions about your healthcare and to give permission for any tests or procedures.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be given medicine called anesthesia to keep from feeling pain during the procedure. You may have:

- Local anesthesia, which numbs part of your body where you will have the procedure
- Regional anesthesia, which numbs the lower part of your body while you stay awake. If you have regional anesthesia, you may also be given medicine to help you relax. The medicine can make you drowsy or you may fall asleep before the procedure.
- General anesthesia, which relaxes your muscles and puts you into a deep sleep

Your provider will make several small cuts near your knee. Your provider will put fluid in the knee so that it is easier to see with an arthroscope, which is a lighted tube with a camera. Your provider can put the scope and tools through the small cuts to find and repair damage to the bones, cartilage, tendons, ligaments, and other structures. If the problem cannot be fixed with this procedure, you may need open knee surgery.

After the procedure your provider will close the small cuts with stitches or sticky tape.

What happens after the procedure?

You may need to use crutches until you can walk without pain. You may need to do physical therapy exercises for a few weeks or months to help make the joint strong again.

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. Ask your provider:

- How long it will take to recover
- If there are activities you should avoid and when you can return to normal activities
- How to take care of yourself at home
- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if you have them

Make sure you know when you should come back for a checkup. Keep all appointments for provider visits or tests.

What are the risks of this procedure?

Every procedure or treatment has risks. Some possible risks of this procedure include:

- You may have problems with anesthesia.
- You may have an infection, bleeding, or blood clots.

Ask your healthcare provider how these risks apply to you. Be sure to discuss any other questions or concerns that you may have.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

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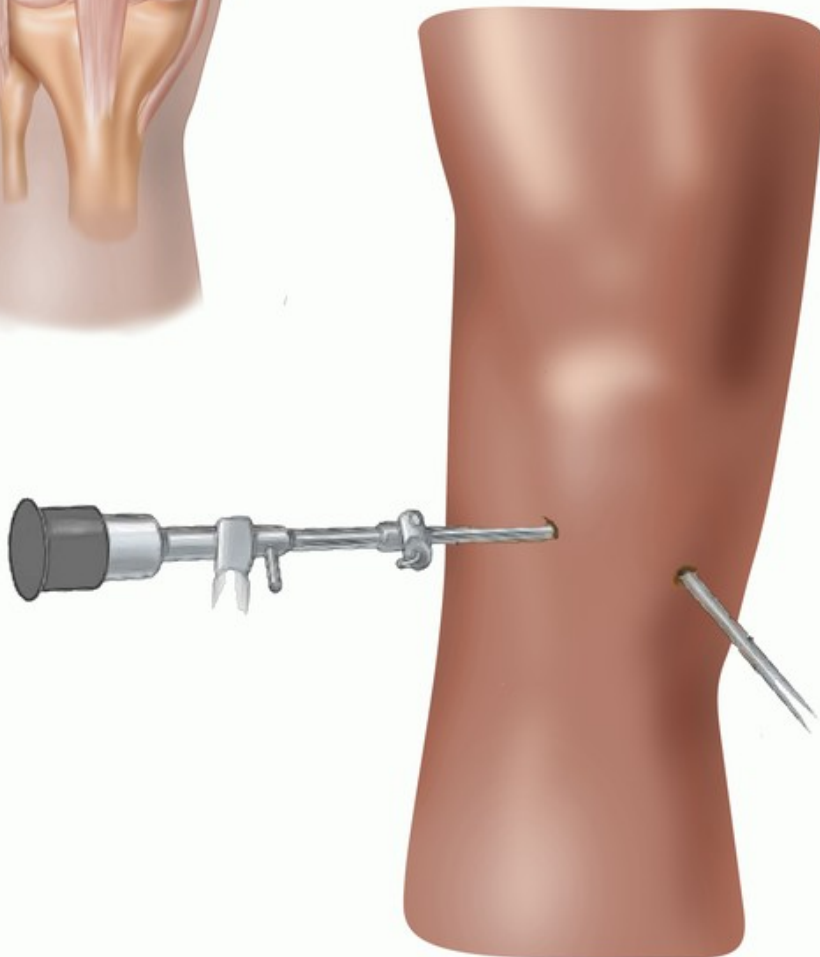
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Your provider will make several small cuts near your knee. Your provider puts the arthroscope and tools through the small cuts to find and repair damage to your knee.



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