

Knee Arthroscopy

Arthroscopy is one of the more common surgical procedures where the joint is viewed with a small camera. Arth- literally means joint, and scope to look through a tube. The procedure provides doctors with a clear view of the knee's inside, which helps them to treat and diagnose any knee problems.

Advances in technology have paved the way to high-resolution cameras and high-definition monitors. These improvements along with others have made arthroscopy an exceptional tool for being able to treat problems with the knee.

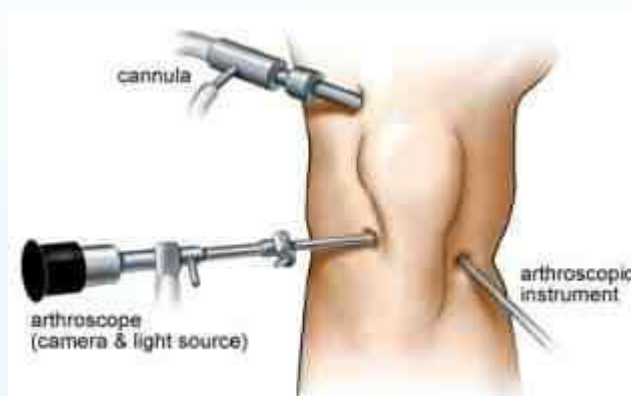
Arthroscopy is performed using small incisions. During the procedure, the surgeon will insert the arthroscope into the knee joint. The tool sends the image onto the computer/television monitor. On the monitor, the surgeon will be able to see all of the structures inside of the knee with exceptional detail. During the knee arthroscopy the surgeon will have a number of tools they can use to trim, cut, burn, or knit together, and these are inserted through another small incision. Arthroscopy is used to repair or remove any damaged tissue.

Knee Arthroscopy Anatomy

The knee is one of the biggest and most complex of all joints found in the body. It joins the shin bone and the thigh bone together. The smaller bone running alongside of the tibia and the kneecap are the two other bones that complete the knee joint. Tendons keep the leg muscles and knee bones connected to enable the knee joint to move. Ligaments join all of the knee bones and deliver stability to the knee.

The anterior cruciate ligament is the one that prevents the femur from sliding backward along the tibia. The medial and lateral collateral ligaments make sure the femur doesn't slide from one side to the other. It is the posterior cruciate ligament that prevents the femur from sliding forward along the tibia.

Within the knee joint are cushions called mensci (singular = meniscus). They sit above the cartilage and act as a shock absorber. They are relatively easily torn, but do not tend to heal well, and a meniscus tear is a common reason why one might require arthroscopic knee surgery.



Undergoing Arthroscopic Knee Surgery:

The orthopedic surgeon will go in and make a few small incisions in the knee. Using a sterile solution, it will be used to fill your knee joint and rinse any cloudy fluid away. This allows the surgeon to see the knee in great detail and clearly.

The first task of the surgeon is to diagnose your problem properly. They will insert the arthroscope and utilize the image on the screen as a guide. If treatment is needed, tiny instruments are inserted through an additional incision. On average, the procedure takes anywhere from 30 minutes on up to an hour. The length of time it takes depends largely upon the necessary treatment and findings.

The incisions might be closed with steri strips or a stitch and covered with a soft bandage. You are then moved into the recovery room and should be able to leave within an hour or two. Make sure to have someone ready to drive you home.

Tips:

- For the first few days following the procedure, make sure and keep your leg elevated.
- Use ice to help relieve pain and swelling in the affected area.
- Make sure to keep the incision area dry and clean. You will be provided information on bathing and when to change the dressing.
- Most individuals need to use crutches after their surgery. You will be advised when to put weight on your leg and foot. Some consultants also recommend a knee brace that will support and protect your knee. Wear this daily for the length of time as required by your consultant or therapist.
- Avoid driving until you are told it is ok to do so. This can be between 2 and 6 weeks depending on the severity of the surgery.