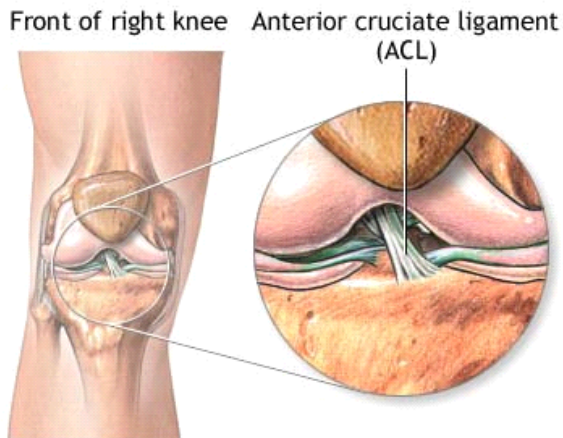


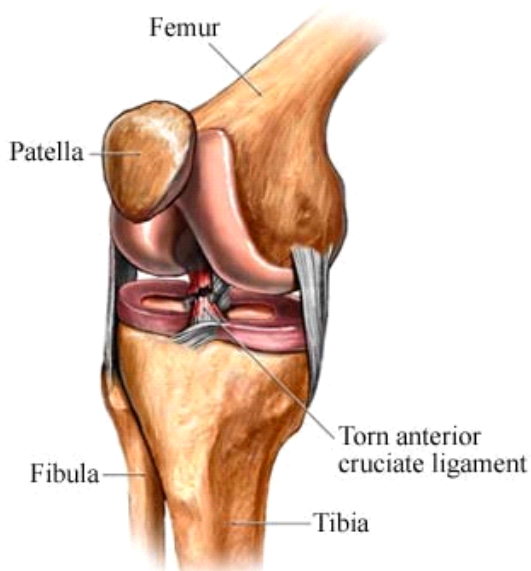
ACL Tear

What is the ACL?



The ACL stands for the Anterior Cruciate Ligament. The ACL is a ligament in the knee that attaches to the anterior aspect of the tibia and goes to the posterior aspect of the femur. The ACL is called the cruciate ligament due to the fact that it crosses with another ligament in the knee. The ACL ligament's main objective is to prevent too much anterior translation and rotation of the tibia on the femur.

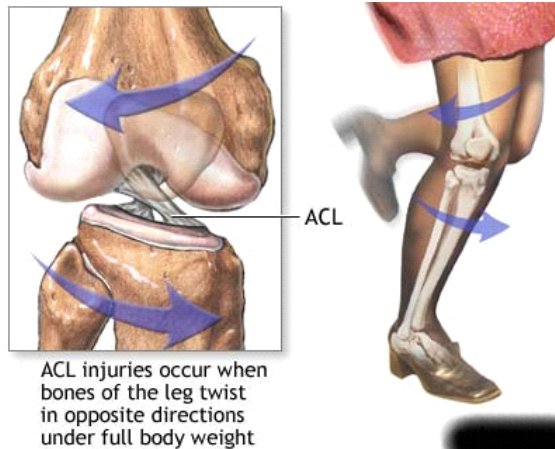
What Causes an ACL Tear?



Diagonal view of the bent right knee

An ACL tear typically occurs with a sudden stop combined with cutting or pivoting, hyperextension of the knee, a blow to the side of the knee or landing awkwardly from a jump or fall. The most common sports involving ACL tears include skiing,

soccer, football and basketball.



At the time of injury there is often an audible pop and immediate pain and swelling. The knee then feels unstable and “loose.” An ACL tear often occurs in combination with a meniscus (cartilage) and MCL tear (ligament on the inside of the knee.)

Treatment

A physician initially diagnoses an ACL tear after taking a detailed history and performing special tests on the knee. If a tear is suspected an MRI may be performed to confirm an ACL tear. Non-surgical treatment may be prescribed with a partial ACL tear that does not involve any other related injuries. This treatment could consist of ice, rest from any sporting activity, anti-inflammatory medication and physical therapy. A knee brace may be prescribed when the patient is ready to return to activity. Surgical treatment may be prescribed for a full thickness tear of the ACL and if there is any associated injury to the MCL or meniscus. The goal of ACL reconstruction is to increase knee joint stability. Following surgery an extensive physical therapy program is prescribed to restore knee range of motion, strength and allow return to previous sports or activities.

If you would like more information about this issue, or need a physician referral in your area, please call us at 310-860-9720.