

# Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Injury

**Other names:** ACL Tear

*ICD9 844.20*

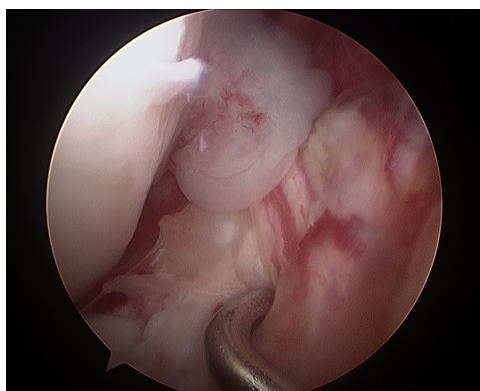
**Definition:** The ACL is an important stabilizing ligament in the knee.

**Anatomy:** The ACL controls abnormal motion or laxity of the femur (thigh bone) on the tibia (shin bone). It runs through the center of the knee from front to back.

**Affected Persons:** The ACL is most commonly injured during sports participation. Female athletes have a 3 times greater risk of ACL injury than males, and the injury is becoming more common in younger athletes.

**Symptoms:** A twisting or hyperextension injury is common, and 70% of patients will feel and/or hear a pop. Swelling within 24 hours is common and a feeling of instability may occur.

**Diagnosis:** The Diagnosis can frequently be made by physical examination from an experienced provider. Frequently this is confirmed with an MRI evaluation.



**Treatment:** ACL injuries can be improved by nonsurgical rehabilitation in the relatively inactive person. Surgical reconstruction is recommended in the more active patient, to avoid instability, reinjury, and further damage. Surgical reconstruction involves the placement of a graft to replace the torn ACL, which can come from the patient's hamstring, Patellar tendon, or a donor/cadaver (allograft). There is recent evidence that specific exercise programs can significantly

reduce the risk of ACL injury, particularly in the young, female athlete.

