

ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (ADULT)

There are 2 Cruciate ligaments and they make an "X" with the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in front and the posterior cruciate ligament in back of the knee. The cruciate ligaments control forwards and backward translation of the knee. The ACL also provides rotational stability.



Mechanism of injury

At the time of injury there may be a "pop" or the knee will give way. Commonly there is pain with swelling. There may also be damage to other structures within the knee including the meniscus, cartilage or other ligaments. Common mechanisms include a sudden stop, sudden direction change, awkward landing, impact or collision and slowing down while running.

Injury Grades

- Grade 1 Injury
 - The ligament partially torn and can be described as stretched.
- Grade 2 Injury
 - The ligament is stretched and partially torn and causes the knee to be "loose".
- Grade 3 Injury
 - This is a complete tear. The knee joint will be unstable.

Investigations

- X-rays do not always show pathology but it is important to exclude fracture
- MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan

Management

- **Non-operative**
ACL do not heal back to their original position. Generally non-operative management is reserved for elderly or those who have low activity requirements. Generally physiotherapy is utilized in conjunction with non-operative treatment.

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Disclaimer: Information provided by this is purely for reference only and medical review and opinion is recommended. Please consult your caring medical practitioner

PATIENT INFORMATION



- **Operative**

The ACL generally cannot be repaired but in some cases this is possible. Most cases are reconstructed. The torn ACL is removed and replaced with a donor tendon from your body or a donor graft. The decision of graft choice is patella tendon, hamstring tendon, and quadriceps tendon. Each donor has advantages and disadvantages and your treating doctor will discuss this with you

- The rehabilitation following reconstruction or repair will take approximately 12 months focussed physiotherapy

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