

Reconstructive surgery of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) of the knee

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is the most important ligament supporting the knee. Damage to the ACL usually causes harmful instability of the knee. As a result, pain, symptomatic instability, and swelling may occur when the knee is strained. Therefore, a tear of the ACL requires corrective surgery.

Procedure

The procedure **is performed under spinal anaesthesia using keyhole surgery** through three small incisions (arthroscopy). In the operation, the damaged ACL is replaced with two tendon grafts acquired from the back of the knee. The graft is attached with screws.

Rehabilitation

The first three months are important for the implantation and strengthening of the graft. Therefore, properly executed after-care and physiotherapy are fundamentally important. Crutches are used for 2–4 weeks to balance walking. Only half body weight is allowed on the knee for two weeks, and after that weight can be borne as the pain allows. The knee may be flexed without restrictions. Moving the ankle and toes is important to avoid deep vein thrombosis. See the rehabilitation guide ([pdf file in Finnish](#)).

Wound care

The dressings may be removed after 24 hours, after which you may shower. Elastic bandage may be used for approximately a week to support the knee. The **sutures are removed after 10–14 days** at your health centre, occupational health centre, or health clinic (neuvola) (date ____/____). You may go to sauna 24 hours after the removal of the sutures.

Treatment of pain

Regular **pain relief medication, elevated position, elastic bandage, and ice pack therapy efficiently reduce swelling and pain after the operation, contributing to the recovery. It is recommended that you take pain killers regularly for 3–4 days** and after that when necessary:

Paracetamol

Anti-inflammatory

Strong painkiller

Other medication

Follow-up visit is with the physician after 3–4 weeks and after 3 months. Follow up visits with the physiotherapist are after 2 and 4 weeks, as well as 3, 6, and 12 months.

Sick leave is approximately 7 weeks.

Contact us

If you experience inflammatory symptoms (increasing pain, heavy swelling, warmth, redness, continuous wound discharge) or other problems in the knee, contact your health centre or treating unit.

Day Surgery Unit A2 on working days from 07.00–17.00 tel. **(06) 323 1552**

Emergency Department at other times tel. **(06) 323 1311**

Your own health centre or occupational health centre

We wish you happy healing!