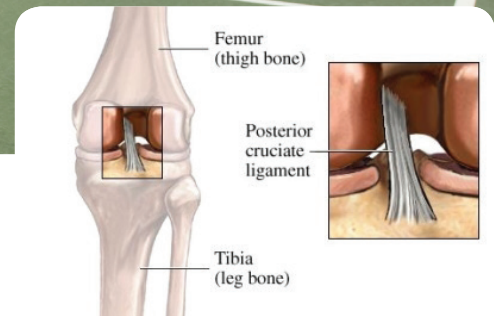


Knee Conditions: POSTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT INJURY (PCL TEAR)

The posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) is connective tissue located within the knee. The PCL connects the thighbone to the shinbone. This connection keeps the shinbone from moving too far backward, stabilizing the knee.



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Causes

The PCL ligament can become strained or torn when a strong force is applied to it. This force can occur during sports or other high-stress activity.

Risk Factors

Factors that may increase your chance of injuring the PCL include:

- Sports injury
- Motor vehicle accident
- Fall on a bent knee
- Strong force to the leg immediately below the kneecap
- Knee dislocation

Symptoms

A PCL tear may cause:

- Pain and swelling in the knee
- Soreness in the area behind the knee
- Weakness or instability in the knee
- Difficulty walking
- Pain when moving the knee

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Diagnosis

You will be asked about your symptoms and medical history. A physical exam will be done. Images may need to be taken of the internal structure of your knee. This can be done with:

- X-ray
- MRI scan

LIGAMENT SPRAINS ARE GRADED ACCORDING TO THE SEVERITY:

- Grade 1 – Mild ligament damage
- Grade 2 – Partial tearing of the ligament
- Grade 3 – Complete tearing of the ligament

Treatment

Talk with your doctor about the best treatment plan for you. Recovery time ranges depending on the grade of your injury. Physical therapy treatment steps may include:

- Exercises to help promote recovery. Specifically, therapists will prescribe a program to strengthen the whole leg as well improve its range of motion.
- Balance exercises will allow you to return to your daily activities, including work and sports while decreasing your risk of falling and reinjuring yourself.
- Hands on treatment to keep your knee joint from becoming stiff
- Ice and vasopneumatic pressure to reduce any swelling and pain

Prevention

Some steps that may help decrease your chance of getting a PCL injury include:

- Protect your knees by doing regular strengthening exercises for your thighs.
- Maintain proper technique when exercising or playing sports.