



ACL Surgery Restores Mobility

with Dr. Eric Morgan

Tearing an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) used to signal the end of a competitive or recreational athlete's career. But today, people of all ages who suffer an ACL injury can resume favorite activities by undergoing outpatient surgery to remove and reconstruct the torn ligament. Blount Memorial Hospital orthopedic surgeon Dr. Eric Morgan explains.



"There's no reason people should have to live with the pain, swelling and buckling of the knee typically associated with a torn ACL," says Morgan. "ACL surgery is not new, but it has been refined over the years to the point where it is a very effective procedure. If you tear your ACL today, you can get it reconstructed, and, if you rehabilitate it properly through physical therapy, you can get back to life and do what you want to do."

While ACL tears are commonly associated with competitive athletes, Morgan emphasizes that anyone at any age can damage an ACL. The injury is typically sports-related and always activity-related, usually tied to rotating or pivoting the knee. Most

of the time, Morgan adds, injured patients will notice a "pop" in the knee, followed by swelling, pain and the knee joint giving way.

He says, "This used to be an injury of younger athletes, but we have avid skiers in their 60s who come in with torn ACLs. After the surgery and rehabilitation, they can hit the slopes again, so age is not a factor when considering the procedure."

Morgan encourages anyone experiencing knee joint discomfort or instability to consult an orthopedic surgeon for an evaluation. This exam will probably include an MRI to get a complete view of any damage. If left untreated, a torn ACL can increase the risk of injury to other structures in the knee. For example, Morgan says, studies have shown that each time a damaged knee gives way, it puts the cartilage at risk and, over time, increases the likelihood that arthritis will develop in the knee joint.

To schedule an appointment with a Blount Memorial orthopedic surgeon, visit www.blountmemorial.org and choose Find a Doctor or call Blount Memorial's Healthline at 865-981-3983.

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