

TWISTED KNEE CAUSES PAIN

Question: I fell, twisting my right knee several weeks ago. The inner side of my knee continues to hurt. What might have happened and what can I do about it?

Answer: Knees are easily injured in a fall. When you break a stick, it breaks in the middle, not at the end. The same analogy applies to the knee. The knee tends to be the "middle of the stick that breaks".

Ligaments provide support for your knees. This includes the medial collateral ligament (MCL), lateral collateral ligament (LCL), anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), and the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL). Lastly, the patellar ligament attaches your knee cap to your tibia (shin bone).

If you continue to have pain along the inner aspect of your knee, you may have injured your medial collateral ligament. This connects the femur to the tibia and limits bending your knee inward.

When you sprain this ligament, you tear ligament fibers. It is the same as spraining your ankle when you tear the ligaments and have swelling.

Sprains are rated according to severity. Grade I is mild with micro tears and these typically can be treated at home.

Grade II sprains are moderate tears and these probably hurt enough to make you seek help. You can have significant swelling and limitations in your ability to walk.

Grade III sprains are severe and with complete rupture of the ligament. You need to see an orthopedic surgeon to determine if this is surgical or not.

The good news is most MCL injuries fall into grade I or II and do not require surgery. These can be treated conservatively with your chiropractor or physical therapist.

The proper examination determines the location of your pain. X-rays can give information, but this is limited for MCL injuries. An MRI is the best test to determine the extent of damage.

The next step is to reduce inflammation which certainly includes ice treatments at home. We apply ultrasound and electrical stimulation to accomplish this. Your family doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatory medication.

Bracing and crutches may be necessary, again based on severity of injury. This allows the ligament injury to form scar tissue and heal much like a cut on your skin. It can take 6 weeks for this scar tissue to form adequately.

We apply cross-friction massage to the MCL as it heals. This helps to reduce excess scar tissue, which can cause pain and limited movement. This is very effective in reducing ongoing pain.

We work to improve your motion and lastly improve your strength. Strong muscles help protect your ligament, there by reducing the risk of future re-injury.

If you do not improve as expected, an MRI is indicated. Another common injury to occur on the inner side of your knee is a meniscus tear. An MRI will look at both MCL and meniscus.

In summary, use ice and rest if you twist or bend your knee inward. If you have significant pain or your pain persists, see your chiropractor for proper evaluation and treatment.

Copyright © 2008 - Konicki Schumacher Chiropractic. All rights reserved.

Dr. Tom Konicki is a board certified chiropractic orthopedist and has practiced for 17 years in South Dayton. You can reach him at www.kschiro.com or mail your questions to Ask the Chiropractor, 2165 Miamisburg-Centerville Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459.