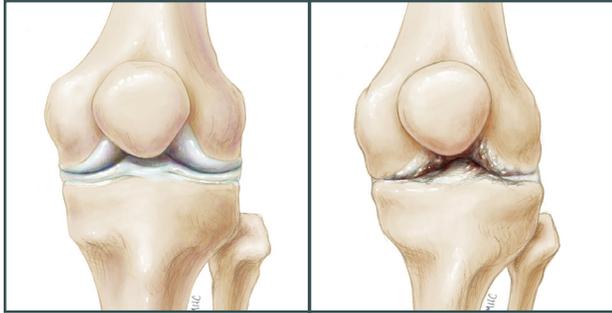


Common Causes of Knee Pain in Adults

Osteoarthritis

A chronic condition in which the cartilage that lines the joint breaks down. Without cartilage to cushion the joint, the bones of the knee rub against each other, causing friction and pain.



Healthy cartilage

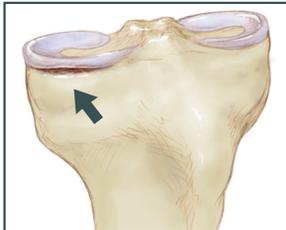
Arthritic cartilage

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Autoimmune disease in which joints become too easily inflamed due to an abnormal immune response throughout the body.

Cartilage tears

Tears may be caused by traumatic injury. In older adults, however, tears in the meniscus (C-shaped pads of cartilage in the knee joint) are often due to degeneration. As we age, cartilage becomes weak and thins, increasing chance of tearing.



Tear in the meniscus

Imaging

Imaging studies like xrays are commonly used to help determine the source of pain. If xrays aren't enough, your doctor may order an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) to help further diagnosis your knee pain.



Dr. B. Sonny Bal, MD, JD, MBA
balb@health.missouri.edu
1100 Virginia Ave, Columbia, MO 65212
Ph: 573.882.6762
Fax: 573.882.8200

YOUR KNEE PAIN

Possible Treatment Options

Conservative treatment

→ NSAIDs

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs such as Ibuprofen, Motrin, and Aleve

→ Joint injections

A mixture of local anesthetic (Lidocaine) and cortisone (a steroid) or ketorolac (anti-inflammatory) is injected into the knee joint to relieve pain. This procedure may be repeated every 1-3 months.

In addition to cortisone, viscosupplementation (Synvisc One) may be injected for relief lasting months. It is used to lubricate the joint and provide long term reduction in pain and inflammation. If the pain returns, it may be repeated every 6 months.

If, however, the injections do not help the pain, it is possible that surgical intervention is the next step.

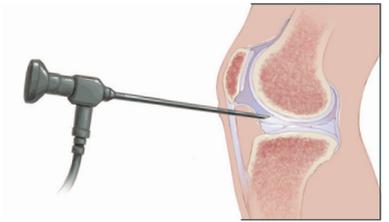
→ Physical Therapy

Surgical Options

→ Arthroscopy ("Scope")

This is a common outpatient surgical procedure in which a small camera is used to look inside the knee joint. Recovery usually takes within 1-2 weeks. Arthroscopies help diagnose and treat in:

- Removal of torn meniscal cartilage
- Trimming of torn pieces of articular cartilage
- Removal of loose fragments of bone or cartilage
- Removal of inflamed synovial tissue

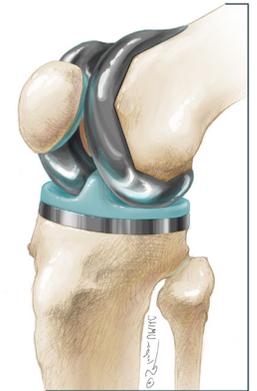


Knee scope

→ Arthroplasty ("Replacement")

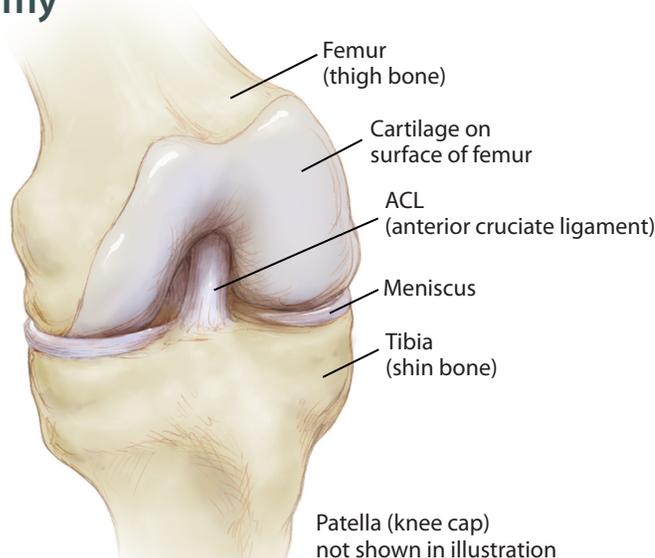
If injections and/or arthroscopy do not help the pain, Dr. Bal will use xrays and clinical judgment to decide if a replacement surgery would be beneficial. The hospital stay is usually 2-4 days.

Additional resources are available regarding this surgery.



Knee Replacement

Anatomy of the Knee



Frequently Asked Questions

How does a knee scope stop my knee from popping and grinding?

The popping/grinding is related to the torn cartilage in the knee. Shaving down these areas during surgery should limit this.

Why does an injection not fix the problem?

Cortisone is an anti-inflammatory, it helps reduce swelling and inflammation, but does not cure arthritis. Injections may work initially and then stop working, which may be due to progression of disease.

What causes knee swelling?

As the body tries to repair the damage in your knee from arthritis, the inflammatory process actually worsens the disease. The body sends repair-cells to the knee, which increase the swelling.

Why does it hurt in the back of my knee?

Whether your knee pain is from torn cartilage or arthritis, the knee joint extends from the front to the back and pain in the back is common.