

Patellar Tendon Graft Reconstruction of the ACL

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Introduction

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is a major stabilizer of the knee joint. This key knee ligament is commonly torn during sports activities. The standard operation to fix a torn ACL is with a patellar tendon graft. The surgeon takes out the middle section of the patellar tendon below the kneecap (patella).

This new graft includes the strip of tendon, along with attached plugs of bone on each end. For this reason, it is sometimes referred to as a bone-patellar-tendon-bone graft. The surgeon removes the torn ACL and puts the new graft into the knee, making sure to line it up just like the original ligament.

Many types of tissue grafts have been tried. The patellar tendon graft has proven to be one of the strongest for ACL reconstruction. Patients who have this operation generally get back to their usual activities and sports. They often do so faster than people who have their ACL reconstructed with other types of tissue grafts.

This guide will help you understand

- what parts of the knee are treated during surgery
- how surgeons perform the operation
- what to expect before and after the procedure

Related Document: [A Patient's Guide to Anterior Cruciate Ligament Injuries](#)

Anatomy

What parts of the knee are involved?

Ligaments are tough bands of tissue that connect the ends of bones together. The ACL is located in the center of the knee joint where it runs from the backside of the femur (thighbone) to the front of the tibia (shinbone).

The ACL runs through a special notch in the femur called the intercondylar notch and attaches to a special area of the tibia called the tibial spine.

The patellar tendon is a thick and strong band of connective tissue on the front of the knee. It starts at the bottom of the patella and fastens just below the knee to a bony bump on the front of the tibia, called the tibial tubercle. When using the patellar tendon as an ACL graft, surgeons remove a strip from the middle of it. The graft includes the bony attachments from the bottom of the patella and from the tibial tubercle.

Related Document: [A Patient's Guide to Knee Anatomy](#)