Cartilage Transplantation

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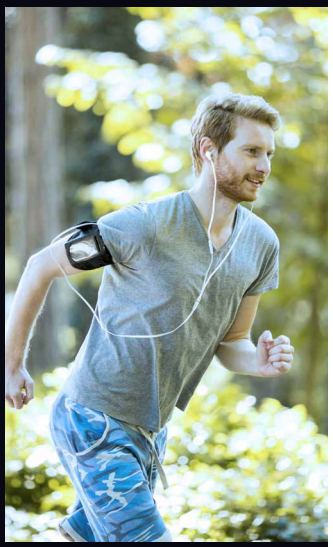
Find out why Cartilage Transplantation therapy may be right for you.



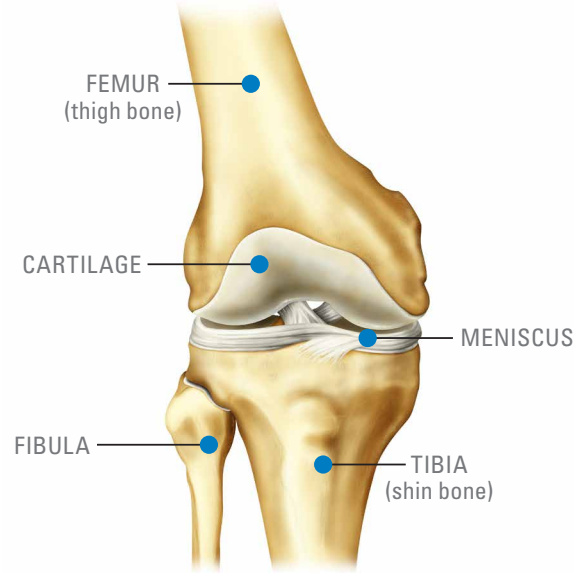
UNDERSTANDING CARTILAGE TRANSPLANTATION

This brochure offers a brief overview of cartilage transplantation. This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the expert guidance of your physician. Please direct any questions or concerns you may have to your doctor.

WHAT CAUSES JOINT PAIN?

The joints in our body, including the hip, knee and shoulder, work as hinges to keep us mobile and allow us to enjoy every day activities.

Covering the surface of the bones of our joints is a tissue called cartilage, a smooth substance that cushions the bones and enables them to move easily. All remaining surfaces of the joint are covered by a thin, smooth tissue liner that releases a special fluid to lubricate the joint. This eliminates friction almost completely in a healthy joint.

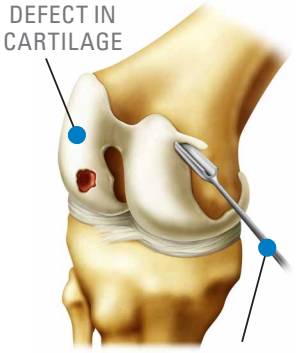


Normally, all of these components work in harmony. But disease or injury can disrupt this harmony, resulting in pain, muscle weakness and increased friction. A defect, or void, in the cartilage can be caused by a number of factors including trauma or injury to the knee.

In some cases, conservative treatment options such as cartilage transplantation can assist in restoring functionality to the joint while limiting pain.

WHAT IS
CARTILAGE TRANSPLANTATION?

The goal of cartilage transplantation is to smooth the cartilage surface, relieve pain, improve function and help you return to normal activities. Your surgeon can use a number of different procedures to help restore a healthy cartilage joint surface by filling the defect in your joint.



How does it work?

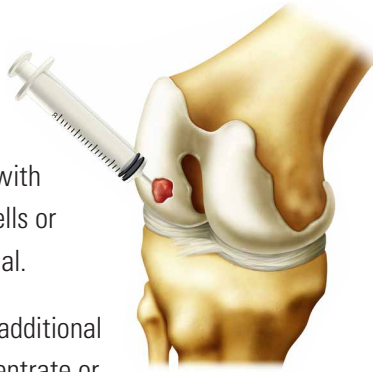
Your surgeon will make a small incision in your skin to clean and remove the defective cartilage while creating a clean void or well.

Your surgeon will then remove a small portion of healthy cartilage from the non-weight bearing area of the same knee. This is an area of the joint where the body is not resisting or supporting your weight.

The healthy cartilage will then be reduced to particulates, or small pieces, to increase the surface area thereby freeing cartilage cells and allowing them to assist in regenerating new tissue at the injury site.

The new particulated cartilage, in conjunction with stem cells and other growth factors, is then implanted into the defective void. From there, it works with elements such as cartilage cells, stem cells or other growth factors to help the body heal.

In some cases, your surgeon may utilize additional procedures including bone marrow concentrate or platelet rich plasma (PRP) therapy.


CARTILAGE TRANSPLANTATION

Am I a Candidate?

Many patients who require cartilage transplantation experience symptoms of pain, stiffness, swelling and loss of function during activities. Your doctor will consider many factors in determining an appropriate treatment method to relieve your pain.

Cartilage transplantation is one of many procedures that can be performed to correct cartilage defects. Your surgeon will guide you in determining the best treatment plan for you.

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What Can I Expect After the Procedure?

Following the procedure, you will be asked to wear a brace to assist in healing as you work to regain your motion.

You will be eager to return to many of the activities you enjoy. Your recovery is partially based upon your condition prior to your procedure. Most patients can expect to use crutches for about six weeks following their surgery. At six weeks, you may begin rehabilitation based on your surgeon's recommendations. You can expect to gradually return to normal activities six to eight months following your surgery.

The decision about activity level is ultimately based on the suggestions and guidelines of your physician as well as your compliance with your physician's recommended post-treatment therapy.

SUMMARY

This brochure is not intended to replace the experience and counsel of your orthopaedic surgeon.

With any surgery, there are potential risks, and results will vary depending on the patient. Cartilage transplantation is not for everyone. Check with your physician to determine if you are a candidate. Your physician will consider the risks and benefits associated with this procedure, as well as individual factors such as the cause of your condition, and your age, height, weight and activity level.

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