

Knee Tears Don't Have to Slow You Down

WITH THE COOLER MONTHS APPROACHING, it's natural to want to get out and enjoy the milder weather. But as your activity level increases, it is not uncommon to have some unwanted knee pain develop when you least expect it.

One of the most common causes of knee pain in patients of all ages is a meniscus tear. Each knee has two of these rubbery C-shaped discs. They cushion your knees as you walk, run, twist, jump, and even sleep.

Nagging Knee Pain

A meniscus tear is a rip in one of the menisci that is usually caused by twisting

or turning quickly. Although these tears often occur during sports, many times people may not have any idea what they have done to their knee to make it start hurting. Sometimes meniscus tears are small, quite mild, and not debilitating. You might have some slight swelling and stiffness for a week or two, but can soon return to your normal activities.

With more significant meniscus tears, however, patients may have pain that is more persistent. The swelling and stiffness in the knee may be more severe and even come and go over a period of days to weeks. With severe tears, the torn meniscus may become trapped

between the bones of the knee and not allow the knee to bend, or it may feel wobbly or give way. In cases like these, it's best to seek medical care.

Treating Severe Tears

Meniscus tears are diagnosed via a thorough history and physical exam, as well as MRIs. Your doctor would likely recommend conservative treatments like physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications, and possibly injections. But in cases where pain persists, surgery may be an option.

Surgical treatment for these types of tears is done using a minimally invasive, arthroscopic procedure. Recovery from knee arthroscopy is usually straightforward, with walking being allowed almost right after surgery. Full recovery takes a few weeks, but before you know it you will be back in the game!



about
the
doctor

Michael Boothby, M.D.
Orthopedics

Dr. Boothby is an orthopedic surgeon on staff at USMD Hospital at Fort Worth. If you need a specialist, call (888) 444-USMD for a free physician referral.



Gallstones: Don't Stomach the Pain

THE GALLBLADDER CAN CAUSE A LOT OF problems. Every year, about a quarter of a million people in the United States need treatment for painful gallstones—rock-like crystals as small as grains of sand or as big as golf balls. They form from cholesterol or bile, a substance needed for digestion.

Women are twice as likely to get gallstones as men, and all adults ages 60 and older face a higher risk. In the past, gallstones usually meant open surgery, a 5- to 8-inch scar, and up to five days in the hospital. Today, surgeons use laparoscopic techniques that provide a quick recovery, less pain, and minimal scars. Untreated gallstones can lead to jaundice or pancreatitis.

Back to Your Life in a Few Days

For this operation, the surgeon makes a tiny cut in the abdomen and inserts a laparoscope. This is a thin tube with a tiny video camera at the end. The camera shows large images on a video monitor. The surgeon makes a few more small cuts, and then carefully removes the gallbladder. Many patients can go home the same day.

Do You Have Gallstones?

Gallstone attacks tend to come on suddenly, often after a fatty meal. Patients feel a severe pain in their upper abdomen, usually on the right side. Other symptoms include:

- Excessive belching



about
the
doctor

Annette Elbert, M.D.
General Surgery

Dr. Elbert is a general surgeon on staff at USMD Hospital at Fort Worth. If you need a specialist, call **(888) 444-USMD** for a free physician referral.

- Back or right shoulder pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sweating
- A low-grade fever

If you experience any of these feelings, talk to your doctor. Laparoscopic techniques may be able to ease your discomfort.

Getting to the Bottom of Kidney Stones

KIDNEY STONES ARE ONE OF THE MOST common disorders of the urinary tract and can be the source of significant pain.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Kidney Disease estimates that about a million people in the U.S. are treated for kidney stones each year. How do you know if you are one of them?

While each person may experience symptoms differently, these are some of the more common ones:

- Extreme, sharp pain in the back or side that will not go away. Changing positions does not help. Pain can come and go.
- Blood in the urine
- Nausea and vomiting
- Frequent urination
- A burning feeling when you urinate
- Fever and chills if there is an associated urinary tract infection

The diagnosis of a kidney stone can be made using a variety of x-ray tests, but a CT scan is most commonly used.

Getting Treatment

Fortunately, the vast majority of kidney stones can pass out of the body without surgery. There are medications that can help move kidney stones along. Pain medications are often prescribed and your doctor will likely recommend drinking more water as well.

If they do not pass on their own or if complicating factors are present, kidney stones may be treated with other techniques. Your doctor will be able to discuss which option is best for you.

Preventing Kidney Stones

There are steps you can take every day to reduce your risk for developing kidney stones. Here are some tips:

- Keep yourself well-hydrated.
- Keep your caffeine intake moderate or less.
- Limit your daily intake of salt and meat.



Did You Know?

- Although they occur more frequently in men, the number of women who develop kidney stones has been increasing.
- Kidney stones mostly strike people between ages 20 and 40.
- Kidney stones can be linked to obesity.
- Once a person develops a stone, he or she is more likely to develop additional stones.



about
the
doctor


Jeff Applewhite, M.D.
Urology

Dr. Applewhite is a urologist on staff at USMD Hospital at Fort Worth. If you need a specialist, call **(888) 444-USMD** for a free physician referral.



HEALTH pulse

Health Pulse is published by USMD Hospital at Fort Worth to educate readers about issues important to their health. It is not intended to replace consultation with a personal physician. © 2013. Printed in the U.S.A.

 Printed on Recyclable Paper 10466M



New Approach to Hysterectomy Offers Better Options

THE DECISION TO HAVE A HYSTERECTOMY isn't easy. But advances in surgical technique can mean less pain and a speedier return to normal life for women who need this operation.

At USMD Hospital at Fort Worth, we are happy to offer a minimally invasive form of hysterectomy for the women of Fort Worth. Hysterectomy involves the removal of the uterus and its cervix, usually due to pelvic pain or bleeding from any of several medical issues, including uterine fibroids. The ovaries and fallopian tubes may also be removed at the time of hysterectomy.

Laparoscopic assisted vaginal hysterectomy (LAVH) allows the patient to recover much more quickly than the traditional way hysterectomy was performed through a large abdominal incision. Traditional hysterectomy involves making a 6- to 7-cm incision on a woman's abdomen, leaving her with a significant scar and a much longer recovery period of up to six weeks. The hospital stay for abdominal hysterectomy

is three days. The minimally invasive LAVH allows the patient to be back to work typically within two weeks. The time spent at USMD Hospital at Fort Worth is only an overnight stay, with the patient back home to her family the next day.

LAVH is performed under general anesthesia and only involves three, small 5-mm incisions on the patient's abdomen. The uterus and cervix are then removed vaginally, which may or may not include the tubes and ovaries. Laparoscopy also allows the surgeon to view the entire abdomen and pelvis to look for any other problems or abnormalities while the surgery is being performed.

Patient satisfaction is much higher with this form of hysterectomy, as post-operative pain is significantly less and very little pain medication is needed. Scarring is also much less with LAVH. Your surgeon will discuss which form of hysterectomy is right for you, as some patients may not be suited for this procedure.

Why Do Doctors PERFORM HYSTERECTOMIES?

Your doctor may recommend a hysterectomy—surgery to remove a woman's uterus—for a several reasons, including:

- Noncancerous growths, called fibroids, that cause heavy bleeding or pain
- Endometriosis, a condition in which tissue that normally lines the uterus grows outside of it
- Prolapsed uterus, in which the uterus has dropped down into the vagina
- Uterine, cervical, or ovarian cancer
- Persistent, heavy vaginal bleeding that can't be controlled by medication or nonsurgical techniques
- Chronic uterine pain that doesn't get better with other treatments



about
the
doctor

Lisa Gardner, D.O.
Gynecology

Dr. Gardner is a gynecologist on staff at USMD Hospital at Fort Worth. If you need a specialist, call **(888) 444-USMD** for a free physician referral.