

FLAGSTAFF BONE and JOINT

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Sports Medicine Joint Replacement General Orthopaedics

Meniscus Tears of the Knee

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The human meniscus is the half-moon shaped structure in the knee made of cartilage. The medial meniscus is located on the inside of the knee (towards the middle of the body) and the lateral meniscus is located on the outside of the knee. Together, they act primarily as shock absorbers between the femur and tibia.

In younger athletes, most injuries to the knee are the result of higher level trauma. The menisci are especially susceptible to tearing when there is both compression and twisting applied across the knee. Because of the extra energy required to tear a meniscus in a younger individual, it is common for the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) or articular cartilage to be damaged at the same time. In older athletes, many tears are the result of trivial trauma such as twisting the knee, squatting, or through repetitive activities such as running.

Meniscus tears typically produce pain, swelling, and mechanical symptoms such as catching or locking within the knee joint. When a tear is "flipped" into the wrong position it creates more friction inside of the knee, and patients will typically complain of swelling. A careful history and physical examination, and often times an MRI, are used to make the diagnosis of a meniscus tear.

Certain meniscus tears, especially in younger patients, may be amenable to repair. Most tear patterns, especially in older patients, are not suitable for repair. If a patient remains symptomatic after conservative measures, surgical intervention in the form of a knee arthroscopy, where the torn piece of meniscus is removed, is recommended.

Dr. Moezzi is fellowship trained in arthroscopy and sports medicine, and specializes in disorders of the knee and shoulder. His experience includes assistant team physician for the San Diego Padres, San Diego State University, and Tufts University in Boston, MA. He is currently the team physician for Coconino High School.

To schedule a same or next day appointment please call: 928.773.2280. To learn more about Dr. Moezzi visit our website at www.flagstaffboneandjoint.com.



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