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Pathoanatomy and Applied Anatomy

 In the immature skeleton, the proximal surface of the spine is covered entirely with cartilage.



 The ACL attaches in the interspinous region of the spine and just anteriorly to the tibial spines, with separate slips anteriorly and later line



 The ligament originates off the posterior margin of the lateral aspect of the intercondylar notch.

 The anterior horn of the lateral meniscus is typically attached in the region of the tibial intercondylar spine just adjacent to the ACL insertion. The posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) originates off the medial aspect of the intercondylar notch and inserts on the posterior aspect of the proximal tibia, distal to the joint line. Meniscal or intermeniscal ligament entrapment under the displaced tibial spine fragment has been reported and may be a rationale for considering arthroscopic or open reduction in

displa



Retraction of an entrapped anterior horn medial meniscus using a retaining suture

(black arrow).



- The menisci become clearly defined by as early as 8 weeks of embryologic development.
- The medial meniscus is C shaped.
 The posterior horn is larger in anteriorposterior width than the anterior horn.

- The medial meniscus covers approximately 50% of the medial tibial plateau.
- The medial meniscus is attached firmly to the medial joint capsule through the meniscotibial or coronary ligaments.
- There is a discrete capsular thickening at the level of the meniscal body which constitutes the deep MCL.

Illustration demonstrating the medial and lateral meniscal posterior root attachments and relevant arthroscopically pertinent anatomy (right knee).



Signs and Symptoms of collateral Ligament Injuries

- Palpation of the collateral ligaments and their bony origins and insertions should locate tenderness at the site of the ligament injury.
- A defect in the collateral ligaments often can be felt if the MCL is avulsed from its insertion on the tibia or if the LCL is avulsed from the fibular head.

If the neurovascular status is normal, tability should be evaluated by varus/valgus stress testing, which may be done immediately after injury in cooperative adolescents but can be more difficult in younger ages or those with significant pain. Valgus stress test of medial collateral ligament. Extremity is abducted off table, knee is flexed to 20 degrees, and valgus stress is applied. A:Frontal view. B: Lateral view.



Anterior drawer test of anterior cruciate ligament.

Foot is positioned in internal, external, and neutral rotation during examination. With anterior cruciate insufficiency, an anterior force (A) displaces the tibia forward (B).



Posterior cruciate ligament injury. Note posterior sagging of the tibia with posterior cruciate injury.



Classification of Ligament Injuries

 Classification of knee ligament injuries is based on the severity of the injury, the specific anatomic location of the injury, and the direction of the subsequent instable caused by an isolated ligament injury or combination of ligament injuries. A first-degree ligament sprain is a tear of a minimal number of fibers of the ligament with localized tenderness but no instability.

A second-degree sprain is disruption of more ligamentous fibers, causing asymmetry with stress testing, compared with the contralateral knee, but minimal or minor instability.

A third-degree sprain is complete disruption of the ligament, resulting in gross instability.

Although difficult to assess clinically, the degree of sprain also is determined with collateral ligaments during stress testing by the amount of separation of the joint surfaces:

First-degree sprain, 5 mm or less (normal/baseline); second-degree sprain, 5 to 10 mm;

third-degree sprain, more than 10 mm

Medial collateral ligament injury. A: Femoral origin. B: Middle portion. C: Tibial insertion.



Lateral collateral ligament injury. A: Femoral origin. B: Middle portion. C: Fibular insertion.



 The MCL and LCL of the knee originate from the distal femoral epiphysis and insert into the proximal tibial and fibular epiphyses, respectively, except for the superficial portion of the MCL, which inserts into the proximal tibial metaphysis distal to the physis



 In children, these ligaments are generally stronger than the physes, and significant lensile stresses usually produce
 epiph seal or physeal fractures rather than ligamentous injury.

- The ACL originates from the posterolateral intercondylar notch and inserts into the tibia slightly anterior to the intercondylar spine.
- The ACL in children has collagen fibers continuous with the perichondrium of the tibial epiphyseal cartilage; in adults, the ligament inserts directly into the proximal tibia by way of Sharpey fibers.
- The PCL originates from the anteromedial aspect of the intercondylar notch and attaches on the posterior aspect of the proximal tibial epiphysis.

- Primary and secondary signs of ACL tears in children have been described and are similar to those seen in adults.
- Primary signs include fiber discontinuity, altered course, and abnormal signal of the ligament
- Secondary signs include increased angle and abnormally vertical orientation of the PCL

Nonoperative Treatment of Ligament Injuries

Indications	Relative Contraindications
Partial ACL tear (<50% fibers, negative pivot-shift test, younger child)	>50% tear, positive pivot shift, older adolescent Symptomatic instability Associated injury requiring operative treatment with prolonged rehabilitation regimen and maximum knee stability (e.g., meniscus repair)
Primary (midsubstance) PCL tear	Complete bony avulsion injury of footprint
Partial/incomplete LCL/PCL injury	Symptomatic instability despite prolonged PT regimen (quad strengthening)

Authors' preferred treatment of medial cruciate ligament injuries.







Authors' preferred treatment for ACL reconstruction in skeletally immature patients.



Adolescent with growth remaining Tanner stage 2 or 3 Males: 13–16 years old Females: 12–14 years old

Transphyseal reconstruction with hamstrings and metaphyseal fixation



Authors' preferred treatment of lateral cruciate ligament injuries.









Authors' preferred treatment of posterior cruciate ligament injuries.







 Postoperatively, patients are placed in a postoperative hinged knee brace and maintained touch-down weight bearing for 6 weeks

- Motion is restricted to 0 to 30 degrees for the first 2 weeks,
 - 0 to 60 degrees for the next 2 weeks,
- then 0 to 90 for weeks 4 to 6,
- with full ROM after 6 weeks,
- The brace is kept locked in extension at night for the first 6 weeks to prevent a flexion contracture.

- 17-year-old soccer player who twisted his knee.
- Sagittal proton density– weighted image through knee at level of posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) shows abnormal tissue (arrow) just deep in relation to normal PCL (arrowhead).

 This is example of double PCL sign and signifies buckethandle tear of medial meniscus with flipped fragment.



- 8-year-old boy with knee pain and no history of trauma.
- Coronal proton density– weighted image through knee shows discoid lateral meniscus with abnormal intrameniscal signal, compatible with degeneration (arrow).



- 9-year-old boy who injured his knee while playing football.
- Sagittal proton density– weighted image through knee shows fiber disruption and abnormal signal of anterior cruciate ligament, compatible with complete tear (arrow).



- 14-year-old girl who injured her knee while jumping on trampoline.
- Axial proton density—weighted image with fat saturation through knee shows amorphous appearance and edema of posterior cruciate ligament, compatible with tear (arrow). Notice normal configuration and signal of anterior cruciate ligament located anteriorly (arrowhead).



- 13-year-old boy who was injured playing football.
- Coronal proton density– weighted image through knee shows abnormal fluid adjacent to intact medial collateral ligament (MCL), compatible with grade 1 injury (arrow).



- 13-year-old boy who was struck by car.
- Coronal proton density– weighted image through knee shows disruption of lateral collateral ligament complex (arrow), with extensive surrounding edema.
- Findings are compatible with grade 3 injury.



- 17-year-old football player who sustained direct trauma to lateral aspect of his knee.
- Coronal proton density—weighted image through knee shows complete tear of MCL, with wavy appearance of ligament distally and surrounding fluid (arrow).
- Associated anterior cruciate ligament tear was identified (arrowhead).
- This patient also had bone marrow edema of lateral femoral condyle.



