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**THE SAN ANTONIO ORTHOPAEDIC GROUP<sup>®</sup>**

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## ACL Injuries

The ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) is one of the four major ligaments in the knee. It is responsible for preventing the tibia (the shin bone) to move forward too much from the femur (the thigh bone). It is also involved in the rotational stability of the knee. It is especially important in sports with a lot of changing of direction such as soccer, basketball and football and also in activities with significant twisting involved such as dancing. Females are at a slightly higher risk of injuring their ACL when compared to males of the same age. Injuries to the ACL can be a minor sprain to complete rupture.

An ACL injury usually has significant swelling, pain and decreased range of motion associated with it. A “pop” that is heard or felt by the patient is not too uncommon. The knee may feel unstable afterwards and often “gives way” in addition to being painful when attempting to walk using the affected leg.

A thorough clinical examination by Dr. Balldin involves the injured knee but also the uninvolved extremity for comparison. X-rays should be obtained in order to make sure there are no fractures (broken bones) surrounding the knee. Often, an MRI is obtained to evaluate the extent of the injury including the ACL tear, other ligaments, cartilage and tendons surrounding the knee.