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THE SAN ANTONIO ORTHOPAEDIC GROUP[®]

Since 1947

ACL Injury Treatment

An ACL tear can be treated in a few different manners. The treatment recommended by Dr. Balldin varies with patient's age, sport, expectations, and goals. Regardless of the type of treatment undertaken the goal is to improve stability and range of motion of the knee in addition to decreasing the pain and swelling.

Occasionally, non-operative treatment of ACL tears is indicated and the combination of physical therapy, ice, rest and avoidance of some activities yield good outcomes. This is especially the case for the older patient who is not looking to return to competitive sports.

Surgical treatment is often the gold standard for a complete ACL tear in the active population. Dr. Balldin performs a minimally invasive arthroscopic ACL reconstruction using a graft to replace the torn ligament. There are many graft options including the patient's own tissue (autograft) and donated cadaveric tissue (allograft). Dr. Balldin will discuss the benefits of the different types of graft and treat each patient individually as there are pros and cons to each graft option. In younger patients there are numerous studies to support the use of one's own tissue (autograft) versus cadaveric tissue (allograft). The two most common types of autograft include the use of the patient's hamstring tendons and the middle portion of the patellar tendon.

Postoperatively, a rehabilitation program is essential in order to reach the goal of resuming activities with a stable and strong knee. Therapy focuses on range of motion and mobility in the first phase followed by strengthening of the entire lower extremity as the newly reconstructed ligament heals. Return to full sports participation in a proper rehabilitation program usually takes six to nine months depending on the type of graft utilized during surgery and if there were other injuries to the knee that were treated at the same time. Dr. Balldin is very involved in the rehabilitation process and will discuss the importance of dedicating time for it with you.