

KNEE SPRAIN

A knee sprain is an injury to the ligaments that connect the thighbone (femur) to the shinbone (tibia). The knee joint has four major ligaments

- The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL)
- The posterior cruciate ligament (PCL)
- The medial collateral ligament (MCL)
- The lateral collateral ligament (LCL)

Knee sprains are classified based upon the extent of the injury:

- Grade I (mild): The ligament is stretched with microscopic tears, but the knee is stable.
- Grade II (moderate): The ligament is partially torn and there is some mild to moderate instability.
- Grade III (severe): The ligament is completely torn and the knee is unstable.

Treatment

If you have a Grade I or II ligament sprain, initial treatment begins with:

- **R**est the joint
- **I**ce the knee
- **C**ompress the swelling with an elastic wrap
- **E**levate the involved leg

If you have a Grade III sprain, treatment will be dependent upon which ligament is torn. It may be necessary to wear a brace to support the knee as the swelling, pain and stiffness subside. A period of physical therapy may also be necessary to regain your motion and strength. Surgery is usually indicated for multiple ligament injuries or an unstable knee, especially a tear of the ACL.