

Knee OCD Fixation — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Unstable Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) Lesion

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

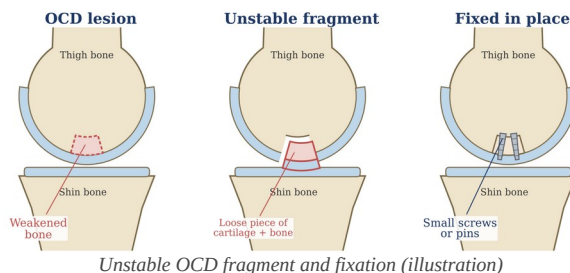
Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) is a condition in which a small area of bone beneath the knee's cartilage loses blood flow and weakens. Over time the overlying piece of cartilage and bone can crack, become unstable, or break free, causing pain, swelling, and catching or locking.

The surgery

Through small incisions with a camera or a small open incision (typically outpatient), the base of the unstable fragment is freshened and the piece is fixed back in place with sutures, small screws, or pins (dissolvable or metal). Bone graft may be added. Metal screws are usually removed later in a smaller surgery. The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: When the fragment heals, the knee's own cartilage is preserved and most patients return to sports. **Risks** are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, the fragment not healing or coming loose, hardware irritation, a planned second surgery if metal screws are used, injury to nearby structures (such as nerves, blood vessels, or cartilage), stiffness, persistent pain, and the need for further surgery. These will be reviewed with you in detail before surgery.



Unstable OCD fragment and fixation (illustration)

Before Surgery

- **Medications:** We will tell you what to stop and when (e.g., blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, some supplements, weight-loss injections).
- **Fasting:** Follow the instructions from your surgery coordinator/facility. In general, you should have nothing to eat or drink starting at midnight the night before surgery.
- **Nicotine:** Stop all nicotine products—they slow healing.
- **Equipment:** Crutches are typically arranged beforehand; a knee brace is added for lesions behind the kneecap. Practice with crutches.
- **Physical therapy:** Schedule your first visit for within about a week after surgery.
- **Home:** Plan for a helper and remove trip hazards; a shower chair can help.
- **Medical history:** Let us know if you or anyone in your family has a history of blood clot disorders or a malignant hyperthermia reaction to anesthesia.
- **Health:** Call us if you develop a fever, illness, or skin problem near the knee.

Day of Surgery

- If instructed, take blood pressure/heart medications with a small sip of water.
- Arrive at the time given by your surgery coordinator.
- Bring your medication list, insurance card, photo ID, and crutches/brace if you have them.
- Wear loose clothing; leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- A responsible adult must drive you home. You may **not** drive yourself.

Immediately After Surgery

- You will recover in the recovery area; most patients go home the same day.
- Your surgeon will discuss the procedure with you and your support person.
- Your care team will review wound care, restrictions, medications, follow-up, and warning signs before discharge.

Milestone	What to Expect After Surgery (General Timeline)
Weight-bearing	Thigh bone: touch-down weight with crutches for 6 weeks, then full over 2 weeks. Kneecap or groove: full weight in a brace locked straight for 6 weeks.
Motion	Usually no limits; bending to 120° by 6 weeks. If metal screws are to be removed, protection may continue until then.
Daily life	School or desk work often within 1–2 weeks; no PE or sports until cleared. No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Running	Only after x-rays show healing, typically 3–6 months.
Sports	Typically 5–6 months (later if healing is slow), after strength and hop testing.
► Please note: This is a general guide only. Detailed post-operative instructions will be provided on the day of surgery, and your restrictions and timeline may change based on the findings and procedures performed.	

Learn More

We **strongly recommend** reading these pages from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (OrthoInfo) before your surgery:

- **Your condition:** Osteochondritis Dissecans — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/diseases--conditions/osteochondritis-dissecans/>
- **Your procedure:** Knee Arthroscopy — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/treatment/knee-arthroscopy/>

Questions before surgery? Call our office at (972) 378-1438. For a medical emergency, call 911.