

Patellar Tendon Repair — Pre-Operative Patient Guide

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Patellar Tendon Tear

Your Condition & Procedure

The condition

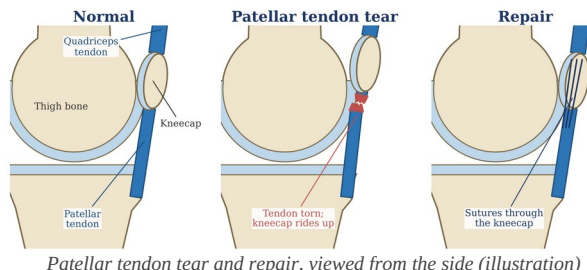
The **patellar tendon** connects the bottom of the kneecap to the shin bone and, with the thigh muscles, lets you straighten the knee. It usually tears from a sudden forceful load, such as landing from a jump. A complete tear makes it hard to straighten the knee or walk and needs prompt repair.

The surgery

This is a typically outpatient surgery done through an incision at the front of the knee. The tendon is reattached to the kneecap with strong sutures through small bone tunnels and/or anchors, often with added reinforcement. Older tears may need a cadaver tendon graft. The final plan is determined during surgery.

Risks & benefits

Benefits: Most patients regain the ability to straighten the knee and return to daily activities. **Risks** are uncommon and include infection, blood clots, re-tear of the tendon, weakness straightening the knee, a change in kneecap height, 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.



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:** A knee brace (locked straight) and crutches are typically arranged beforehand. Practice with crutches.
- **Physical therapy:** Schedule your first visit for within about a week after surgery.
- **Home:** Plan for a helper for the first few days and remove trip hazards.
- **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 brace/crutches 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)
Brace & weight	Full weight right away with crutches and the brace locked straight; it stays locked for walking for 6 weeks (8 for older or reinforced repairs).
Motion	Generally allow bending to 45° for 4 weeks, then ~15° more per week to 90° by 6 weeks; full by 12 weeks. This is subject to variation based on the repair. No active straightening out of the brace for 6 weeks.
Daily life	Desk work often within 2 weeks; brace and crutches are weaned by ~8 weeks. No driving while taking narcotic pain medication.
Running	Typically at ~5 months, once strength allows.
Activity	Full release typically 6–9 months (4–6 months for less demanding activity).
► 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 and procedure: Patellar Tendon Tear** — <https://orthoinfo.org/en/diseases--conditions/patellar-tendon-tear/>

Video: You may find a video demonstrating an example (not the exact technique) of your surgery at

<https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/activity/2265940-patellar-and-quadriceps-tendon-tears> (or browse <https://patient.orthopedica.com/student/catalog>).

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