

Overview

The joint surface of the knee consists of bone covered by cartilage rather like icing on a cake. This can be damaged by acute trauma, where the cartilage and sometimes also the bone underneath, can be peeled off. If the cartilage wears off due to old age, or natural wear and tear, this is called arthritis or “osteoarthritis”.

In the acute injuries, cartilage sometimes repairs itself, but many times it does not. If there is a bare area of bone caused by either trauma or wear and tear, it may well produce pain. Treatment of this area varies. Arthritis is covered elsewhere. Unfortunately in arthritis, the body does not have the capacity to repair the cartilage, so other treatments are required.

Acute Cartilage Injury

In younger patients, cartilage damage may repair itself in a couple of months. If not, there are a few techniques we can use to help the repair process.

Microfracture

This technique performed arthroscopically, passes wires or metal picks into the bone in order to stimulate bleeding in the bone, hopefully followed by cartilage regeneration.

Cartilage Repair Techniques

These include a myriad of different and flowery named procedures. Basically we are trying to harness the body’s own cells into growing into cartilage cells to fill the defect. These techniques are still not reliably predictable in their outcomes. I would advise a very careful chat with me before you embark upon this sort of treatment as the work required by the patient is very hard to do. Results are definitely not guaranteed.

If you would like to arrange a consultation or just need an informal chat, please contact me at:

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