

Microfracture

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with the Knee or Ankle Arthroscopy leaflet

Microfracture is a surgical technique that has been developed to treat chondral defects. Chondral defects are damaged areas to the cartilage surface of a joint. It is a common procedure used to treat patients with areas of damaged cartilage that go all the way down to the bone.

This procedure encourages the body's own healing abilities

The microfracture procedure is done arthroscopically (key hole), through approximately 3 small incisions into the knee. Multiple holes, or microfractures, are then made into the damaged areas of the joint. Bone marrow cells and blood from the holes completely cover the damaged area. This is the basis for the new tissue formation. This eventually matures into firm repair tissue that becomes smooth and durable.

Since this process is gradual, it usually takes two to six months after the procedure for you to experience improvement in the pain and function of the joint. Improvement is likely to continue for a 2-3 year period.



What to expect Post Op

Most patients progress through the postoperative period with little or no difficulty. Some patients may develop mild pain or a grating or "gritty" sensation, days or weeks following the operation.

Typically, swelling and joint effusion (fluid in the joint) disappear within 8 weeks after a microfracture procedure. Occasionally, a recurrent effusion develops between 6-8 weeks after surgery, when you begin to put weight on the injured leg. This effusion may mimic the preoperative or immediate post operative effusion, although it is usually painless. This usually resolves within several weeks. Very rarely is a second arthroscopy required for recurring effusions.

Following your operation you will be given important advice regarding mobilisation. It is essential that you follow this advice to maximise your recovery

You will have to mobilise with crutches for up to 6 weeks post op, and may have restriction on the amount of weight you can put through the operated limb. You may be given a hinged knee brace to limit the range of knee flexion for the first 6 weeks post-op.

Driving

You should not attempt to drive until you feel confident to carry out a full emergency stop procedure and able to walk without stick/crutch and without limping. This will be at least 6-8 weeks post op on average.