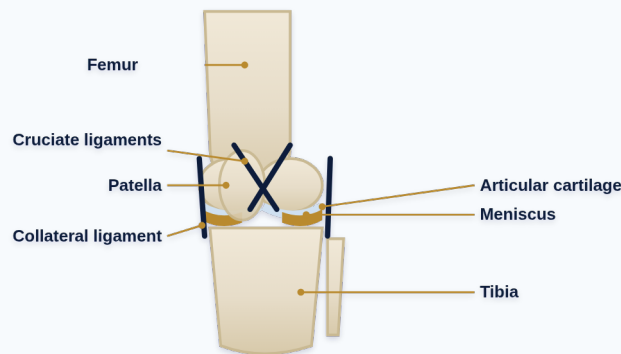


KNEE CONDITION

Kneecap (Patella) Fractures

Patella Fracture — Patient Condition Guide



Knee anatomy — for education; your anatomy may differ

OVERVIEW

A patella (kneecap) fracture is a break in the bone at the front of the knee, usually from a direct fall or blow. Because the kneecap is part of the extensor mechanism that straightens the leg, a displaced fracture can prevent you from straightening the knee.

ANATOMY

The patella sits within the quadriceps and patellar tendons and glides in a groove on the femur. It gives the quadriceps leverage and is essential for straightening the knee.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain and swelling at the front of the knee
- Inability to straighten the knee or do a straight-leg raise
- A palpable gap in the kneecap
- Difficulty walking or bearing weight

DIAGNOSIS

Dr. Pettit examines the extensor mechanism and orders X-rays to define the fracture; a CT scan may help with complex patterns.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Non-displaced fractures with an intact extensor mechanism are treated in a brace with protected weight-bearing. Displaced fractures are treated with surgery (open reduction and internal fixation using wires, screws, or a plate) to

restore the joint surface and the ability to straighten the knee. See the Patella ORIF surgical guide for details.

RECOVERY OUTLOOK

Bone healing typically takes 6–12 weeks, with motion and strength restored over several months of physical therapy.



SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE

robertpettitmd.com/handouts/patella-fracture.pdf

This handout is for general patient education and does not replace personalized medical advice. Always follow the specific instructions given by Dr. Pettit and your care team.

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