



# Cartilage Repair Center

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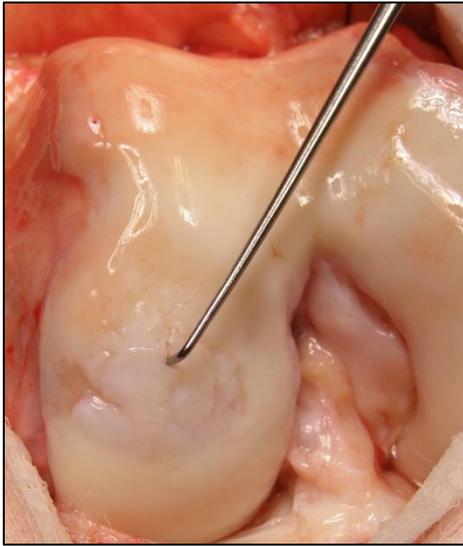
## **What is osteochondral allograft transplantation?**

Osteochondral allograft transplantation is a useful technique to repair symptomatic articular cartilage defects with bony involvement or following a failed cartilage repair procedure (i.e., microfracture). An osteochondral allograft is a piece of fresh tissue containing bone and cartilage that is taken from a deceased donor. The allograft is used to replace damage cartilage that lines the ends of bones in the knee joint. X-rays with radiographic markers are needed to shape and precisely fit the allograft to the defect in the damaged knee joint. The x-rays are sent to a commercial procurement company that will find a suitable match. After screening the tissue for absence of disease, the fresh tissue will be available for transplantation.

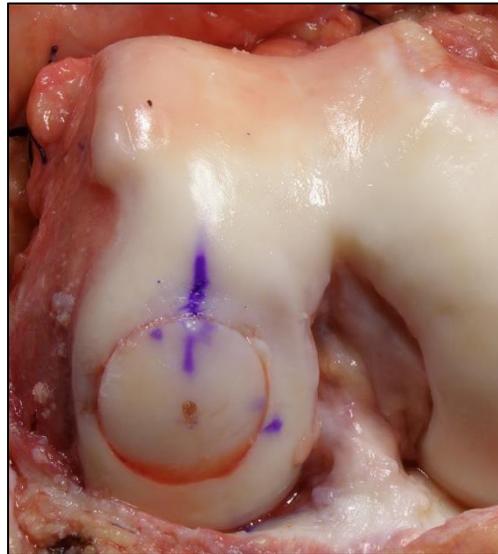
Fresh tissue is preferable as cartilage viability is associated with a better long-term result. When the tissue becomes available, you will be contacted. You will need to come in within two weeks of the tissue being available. It may take as quick as two weeks or as long as three to six months before the appropriate match is available. Tissue typing is not required as in other organ transplantation with a blood supply, such as kidney, heart, or lung. Rejection of bone and cartilage is very rare and usually manifests as persistent swelling and a nonunion of the bone-to-bone junction.

## **What will happen during my surgery?**

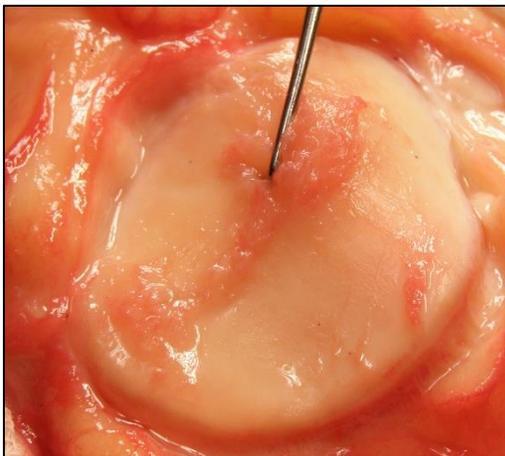
The implantation of osteochondral allograft is typically performed through an open incision, under general or spinal anesthesia. In surgery, the size of the defect is measured. A portion of the cartilage and underlying bone is then removed. The fresh allograft is shaped to match the size of the prepared defect. The allograft is then gently press-fit into the defect. Occasionally, further stabilization is needed using a screw/pin. A drain will be left inside the joint overnight to remove any postoperative bleeding from the donor site. The drain is either taken out in the hospital the following morning or in the office. The procedure takes approximately 60 minutes to perform.



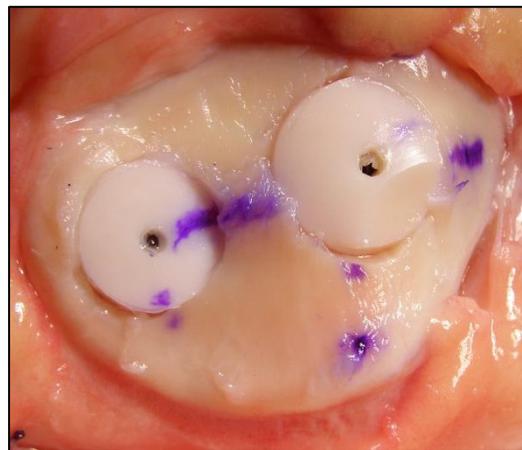
**Chondral Injury on Femur**



**Press-fit Osteochondral Allograft on Femur**



**Chondral Injury on Patella**



**Press-fit Osteochondral Allografts on Patella**

### **What can you expect post-operatively?**

Range of motion exercises and protected weight-bearing for 6 to 10 weeks on crutches are required. Range of motion exercises reduces the risk for knee stiffness and protected weight-bearing improves bony healing. Pain is most severe the first seven days after surgery. Narcotic medications are required on a regular basis for 48 hours after surgery. Within seven days after surgery, the narcotic medications are usually discontinued and required only prior to sleeping at night. We also recommend Tylenol PM for nighttime discomfort. Cold therapy by a Cryo-Cuff™ is used for up to six weeks after surgery to assist in reduction of swelling. A continuous passive motion (CPM) machine is helpful for the first three weeks after surgery.

to assist in motion and in reduction of swelling. This is not always covered by insurance carriers. Stationary bicycling is useful after surgery as well.

Six weeks following surgery, crutches are gradually discontinued as comfort allows. At this time, strengthening exercises through closed-chain progressive to open-chain exercises occurs. Postoperative rehabilitation with physical therapy is individualized.

### What are the risks with each surgery?

- Hemarthrosis- This is a collection of blood in the joint, requiring needle drainage.
- Sinkage/“drop-out” of graft- The osteochondral graft is placed into its recipient site by a press-fit manner. It is possible that the grafting may sink further into its recipient site. It is also possible that the graft may become prominent or “drop-out” of its recipient site. Both situations are possible but unlikely. They have been reported in the literature.
- Infection- A risk of 1 in 200 is the accepted risk for open knee surgery.
- Risk of virally transmitted disease may occur. Specimens are screened for virally transmitted disease, however transmission is still possible.
- Failure of the graft by 10 years occurs in 40% of allografts. At this time, a new allograft can be used, or joint replacement may be warranted. This would be dependent on the arthritic condition of the knee.

### How will my pain be controlled after surgery?

Immediately following surgery during your hospital stay, your pain will be controlled using IV pain medication. During your hospital stay, one of the goals of your care will be to transition you from IV pain medication to oral pain medication. This is often achieved by day one after surgery. You will be sent home from the hospital with a prescription for oral pain medication to be filled at your local pharmacy. The most commonly prescribed post-op pain medications include Oxycodone and Tramadol. Most patients will require regularly scheduled doses of pain medication (every 4-6 hours) for the first week. After the first week, you will begin to decrease your pain medication use to prior to physical therapy and prior to bedtime. Cold ice therapy is very effective for pain without medication side effects. PolarCare™, Ossur™ continuous cold ice flow and Game Ready™ continuous ice flow compression therapy are all effective ice therapy machines. Most patients will not require any pain medication past weeks 4-6. **Florida State Law does not allow us to call in prescriptions or refill narcotic pain medications without a face-to-face office visit. We are only allowed to give a week of narcotic pain medication at a time. Be sure to follow the directions carefully. It is important to know how to obtain your pain medication refills appropriately and in a timely manner.**

### When will I follow-up with my surgeon after surgery?

Your first postoperative visit takes place 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery. This appointment is critical for checking your incision healing and range of motion as well as to answer any

questions you may have in the first few weeks following surgery. You will then follow up 6 weeks, 12 weeks, 6 months, and one year after surgery. At one-year postoperative, you will discuss with your surgeon your return to higher level activity. After your first year, you will follow with your surgeon on a yearly basis.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How do I get insurance approval for surgery?** Your insurance approval will be handled by your surgeon's finance office. Often you do not need to do anything but wait for the administrative assistant to contact you to let you know you have been approved. In some instances, appeals need to be made to your insurance company for denial of services. If this is the case, the administrative assistant will contact you and instruct you on how to proceed.

**How long is my insurance approval good for?** Most insurance approvals are valid for a few months from the date of approval.

**When will I start physical therapy?** You will start physical therapy the same week as your surgery.

**What will I do during physical therapy?** The primary goal of physical therapy is to initially increase ROM, so that you do not get a stiff knee following surgery. You will then begin to work on increasing strength after surgery. You will be provided with a detailed protocol of what you should and should not be doing at each postoperative phase. You will provide this to your physical therapist.

**I've heard about a CPM machine, what is this and will I use one?** A CPM machine is a Continuous Passive Motion machine that is used following knee surgery to help patients regain range of motion. You will begin using a CPM machine 2-3 days after surgery and will continue using it for a period of 3 weeks for a minimum of 3 hours per day (1 hour, 3 times per day). Often, we recommend our patients use the CPM machine 4-6 hours per day. Some patients find great comfort in using the CPM machine and prefer to sleep in the machine. That is okay, too.

The CPM machine will be provided to you and is often covered by your insurance. Outpatient physical therapy and use of a stationary bike usually are adequate to maintain ROM after 3 weeks depending on the complexity of your surgery.

**When do I need to wear my brace?** You will need to wear your brace anytime you are up moving around on your crutches. You will use your brace for 6 weeks on average. You do not need to wear your brace for CPM, sleeping, or when you are sitting.

**How long will I need to use my crutches?** Depending on how quickly your graft heels and your surgeon's preference, you will need to use your crutches around 6 weeks on average.

**When can I drive?** For patients undergoing right knee surgery, you may not return to driving until you have good leg control, usually 3-6 weeks as assessed by your therapist and

surgeon. For patients undergoing left knee surgery that do not drive standard transmission vehicles, you may return to driving between 2-4 weeks. **You must be off all narcotic pain medication to drive.**

**When can I shower?** You will have a plastic dressing on the incision that should stay on for 7 days after the surgery with which you can shower. After 7 days, the dressing can be removed, and you can shower directly on the skin. There are no stitches to be removed. Do not submerge your incision in a pool, hot tub, bathtub until cleared by your surgeon.

**When can I go back to work?** This will be different for each patient and depends largely on the type of work you do. Most patients who work in a sedentary position or desk work will be back to work by 6 weeks. Those patients who work in more labor intensive jobs may be out of work for 3-6 months.

**When can I resume my regular activity?** Return to regular activity depends highly on each individual patient's definition of regular activity. Non-impact activities, such as walking, swimming, bike riding, and elliptical trainer, can all be resumed by 4-5 months post-operative. Higher demand activities, such as running and sports, will not be able to be resumed until at least 1 year post-operatively.

**Will I need to stay in the hospital?** You may be required to spend 1-2 nights in the hospital.

**I don't like how narcotic pain medication makes me feel, can I take something else?**

You may use Tylenol (acetaminophen) for pain control following surgical intervention. However, you should refrain from using any anti-inflammatory medications for the first 3 months following surgery, as these medications can slow the healing of your bone. These anti-inflammatory medications include medications such as Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, and Celebrex. A continuous ice flow machine is also very effective for pain and swelling of the knee with sedating side effects, but the skin should be checked regularly, every ½ hour to ensure you do not get frostbite.

**Who do I call if I have a question prior to my appointment?** If you have questions regarding your upcoming surgery, you may call your surgeon's nurse practitioner or research assistant.