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## Understanding **Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tear**

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## What is ACL Tear

An Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Tear is a common knee injury that occurs when the ligament in the knee is damaged or torn. ACL is a crucial ligament that helps stabilise the knee joint and control its movement. Injuries to the ACL are often associated with sports activities that involve sudden halts, changes in direction or direct impact to the knee.

### Symptoms of ACL Tear

- Sudden and severe pain in the knee
- Swelling within a few hours of the injury
- A popping sound or sensation at the time of injury
- Difficulty or inability to bear weight on the affected leg
- Instability or a feeling that the knee may give way

### Diagnosis

If one suspects an Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tear, it is important to consult a healthcare professional. They will conduct a thorough examination of your knee, review the medical history, and recommend imaging tests (if required) such as a MRI to confirm the diagnosis and assess the severity of the injury.

### Treatment Options

#### Conservative Management

- Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE) to manage pain and swelling

- Physical therapy to strengthen the muscles around the knee
- Use of a knee brace for support during activities
- Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) for pain and inflammation

#### Surgical Intervention

- In some cases, surgery may be recommended, especially for individuals with significant instability or those engaged in activities that require a high level of knee function.
- ACL Reconstruction Surgery involves replacing the torn ligament with a graft, often from the patient's own hamstring muscle or patellar tendon.

### Recovery and Rehabilitation

Whether treated conservatively or surgically, rehabilitation is a critical aspect of recovering from an Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tear. A physiotherapist will work with the patient to:

- Restore range of motion
- Strengthen muscles around the knee
- Improve balance and stability
- Gradually include weight-bearing and functional activities into the rehabilitation regime

### Preventing Future Injuries

After undergoing rehabilitation for an Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tear, it's important to take following steps to prevent future injuries:

- Follow a structured exercise programme to maintain strength and flexibility
- Use proper techniques during sports activities
- Wear appropriate protective gear, such as a knee brace

### When to seek medical attention

If one experiences any of the following symptoms, they can seek prompt medical attention:

- Severe pain or swelling
- Inability to move the knee
- Signs of infection, such as redness, warmth, or fever

An Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tear can be a challenging injury, but with the right treatment and rehabilitation, many individuals can regain function and return to their normal activities. It is essential to work closely with healthcare professionals to determine the most appropriate course of action for specific situation and follow recommended guidance throughout the recovery process.