

Patellar Instability Treatment Guidelines

Instructions for use

Keep this handout as a reference for your treatment plan. Update as needed based on your progress and any changes in your treatment.

Overview of patellar instability

Patellar instability occurs when the kneecap (patella) moves out of its normal position, often leading to pain and dysfunction. Treatment options are tailored to each patient's specific needs and may include both non-surgical and surgical approaches.

Non-surgical treatment

Physical therapy

Goals:

- Improve dynamic stability of the patellofemoral joint
- Enhance lower extremity alignment and movement patterns
- Gradual return to sport-specific activities

Key components:

- **Strengthening exercises:** Focus on quadriceps, hip, and core muscles
- **Patellar stabilization techniques:** Taping and bracing to optimize patellar tracking
- **Rehabilitation protocol:** Follow a progressive, criterion-based plan

Bracing

Purpose:

- Limit lateral translation of the patella
- Improve patellar tracking within the trochlear groove
- Provide proprioceptive feedback
- Allow early mobilization and function

Notes:

- Use patellar stabilization braces as prescribed
- Follow instructions for wearing and caring for the brace

Surgical treatment

Indications:

- Chronic instability unresponsive to conservative care
- Acute dislocations with osteochondral fractures

Common procedures:

- **MPFL repair or reconstruction:** Addresses instability by repairing or reconstructing the medial patellofemoral ligament
- **Tibial tubercle osteotomy:** Corrects alignment issues
- **Trochleoplasty:** Deepens the trochlear groove
- **Lateral retinacular release or lengthening:** Addresses tightness in the lateral structures
- **Chondral/osteochondral repair:** Repairs associated cartilage injuries

Procedure selection:

- Based on a comprehensive evaluation of your anatomical risk factors and pathology

Post-surgical care

Physical therapy:

- Continue physical therapy as outlined in the non-surgical treatment section
- Adhere to the post-operative rehabilitation protocol provided by your surgeon and physical therapist

Follow-up:

- Schedule regular follow-up appointments to monitor progress and adjust treatment as needed

Healthcare provider's information

Physician's office:

Physical therapist:

Emergency contact:

Additional comments and reminders