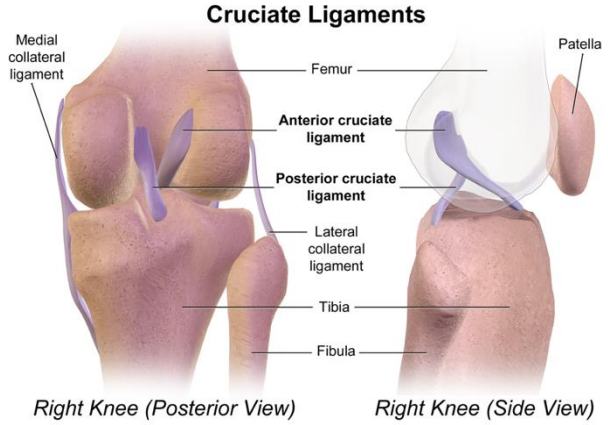
Can Your Torn Knee Ligament Heal on its Own?

1. Will you need surgery?
    a. You have four major ligaments in your knee. All attach from the femur bone which makes the upper half of the knee joint to the Tibia or Fibular bones which make up the bottom of the knee joint. All four help stabilize the knee joint and limit the mobility of the joint.

You have one ligament on each side of the knee - Lateral Collateral Ligament (LCL) on the outside of the knee and Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) on the inside of the knee. Most often the collateral ligaments do not need surgery (although there can be exceptions).



The other two ligaments are located inside the knee and cross each other inside the knee joint. The Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL)and Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL). When a cruciate ligament is completely torn. If an ACL or PCL ligament is torn, you will generally require surgery. In this surgery the surgeon will take tendons from other parts of your leg (or from a cadaver) for the reconstruction.

2. What happens if you do not have the surgery?
    a. If your ACL or PCL is torn and you opt out of surgery, you may experience continued knee pain or instability. If you want to continue to participate in sports or physical labor the surgery is often warranted. If the ACL or PCL is completely torn, there will be instability in the knee that can cause feelings of sudden knee shifting or buckling. Also, without an ACL or PCL repair you have a higher risk

of eventual injury to the cartilage in your knee (due to the instability).

Generally, with a complete ACL or PCL tear you will be unable to:

1. Jump and land on the knee
2. Accelerate and then change directions
3. Rapidly pivot on the knee

If you opt out of surgery a knee brace and physical therapy might help with stability

Keep in mind the reconstructive surgery is complicated and the rehab is quite involved.