

Orthopedic Surgeon Performs ACI Surgery In Outpatient Setting

Cartilage injuries in the knee have long been difficult to treat. While providing short-term pain relief, traditional therapies are often ineffective at preventing further joint damage. However, a revolutionary procedure perfected by Beverly Hills orthopedic surgeon Steven Meier, M.D. now offers patients with certain types of cartilage damage within the knee the potential to reverse painful and debilitating joint degeneration and dysfunction.

The procedure, known as autologous chondrocyte implantation (ACI), is a two-step surgical process that uses a patient's own cells to regrow healthy cartilage inside the knee. Dr. Meier, a renowned expert in cartilage restoration, is one of a select few surgeons in Los Angeles who perform the cutting-edge therapy in an outpatient setting.

“Under normal conditions, the cartilage that cushions and protects the knee is not capable of repairing itself when damaged,” explained Dr. Meier. “The goal of ACI surgery is to regenerate healthy cartilage by implanting the patient's own concentrated cartilage cells within a growth-promoting biocompatible matrix at the site of injury.”

Using a minimally invasive arthroscopic technique, Dr. Meier recently performed a CARTICEL® cartilage biopsy at the La Peer outpatient surgery center. The biopsy marks the first stage of ACI surgery, in which a patient's cartilage cells are harvested from the joint. Over the next several weeks, the cells will be cultured in a laboratory that specializes in cell expansion, and these cells will multiply in number until sufficient to be re-implanted.

The second stage of ACI will require an open knee surgery to expose the site of cartilage injury. After coating a synthetic matrix with the concentrated solution of cells, the implant is sewn tightly to the surrounding healthy cartilage in the knee. The new cartilage will take several months to fix onto the bone surface and become well-integrated with the surrounding tissue.

Through a combination of careful patient evaluation and this innovative joint-preserving technique, Dr. Meier has performed numerous ACI surgeries with a very high success rate. According to Dr. Meier, the procedure is reserved for individuals who meet a very specific set of criteria. Candidacy for ACI surgery is evaluated based on the type and location of cartilage damage, the health of surrounding ligaments and soft tissue within the knee, and the patient's commitment to a lengthy rehabilitation schedule.

“The major factor we look for is the patient's understanding and dedication to up to twelve months of rigorous physical therapy,” said Dr. Meier. “Even if the physical

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state of the knee is ideal for surgery, improper or inconsistent rehabilitation increases the risk of a poor outcome.”

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