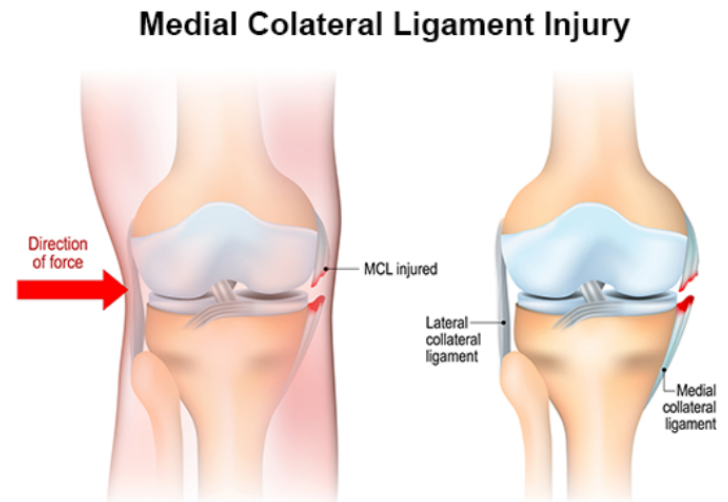


## PATIENT HEALTH JOURNEY

### BECOME AN EXPERT: MCL Sprain

The **Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL)** plays a crucial role in stabilizing the knee joint by connecting the femur (thigh bone) and the tibia (shin bone). A **sprain** refers to damage of ligamentous tissue, which is different from strains that affect muscles or tendons. In addition to the MCL, there are three other major ligaments that contribute to knee stability: the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), posterior cruciate ligament (PCL), and lateral collateral ligament (LCL). The MCL is situated on the inside of the knee and helps prevent "sideways" motion or opening of the knee's interior.



MCL injuries are typically caused by a contact force to the outside of the knee or a non-contact rotational injury. Although the MCL is the most common ligament injured in the knee, almost all cases of MCL sprains can be managed conservatively or without surgery.

MCL sprains are classified into three grades based on the severity of the injury. A **Grade 1** MCL sprain is a milder injury where only a few ligamentous fibers are damaged, resulting in minimal tenderness and pain on the inside of the knee. There is generally no significant swelling, and the ligament still maintains stability. A **Grade 2** MCL sprain indicates moderate damage to the ligament, but it is not completely torn. This results in mild to moderate swelling and tenderness on the inside of the knee, and the ligament may show some laxity during examination. In contrast, a **Grade 3** MCL sprain involves a complete tear of the ligament, resulting in significant swelling, pain, and tenderness on the inside of the knee. Grade 3 sprains often have associated injuries to other knee structures like the ACL and meniscus.

Evaluation and diagnosis of an MCL sprain includes a detailed history and physical examination to assess the stability and range of motion of the knee. Imaging tests such as X-rays or MRI may be ordered to rule out other injuries, such as fractures or tears to other ligaments or cartilage in the knee joint. Customized treatment programs for MCL sprains typically involve **non-operative treatment** with bracing, medication, and physiotherapy. Injection therapy, such as corticosteroid injections, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections, and prolotherapy injections, may also be considered. If deemed necessary, surgery is also a possibility.

The time required to return to full activity after an MCL sprain depends on the **severity** of the sprain and the **demands** of the desired activity. It's important to remember that healing rates vary among individuals, and sticking to an exact timeline can be frustrating.

# BECOME AN EXPERT cont'd

Grade 1 sprains may take 1-2 weeks, grade 2 sprains 2-4 weeks, and grade 3 sprains 6-12 weeks to return to full activity. Criteria for returning to sport include full painless range of motion, at least 90% of normal leg strength, completion of exercise progressions provided by a physiotherapist, adequate healing of the ligament on exam, and mental confidence in performing the activity. Depending on the level of demand of the activity or sport, wearing an MCL support brace for 3-6 months is recommended for grade 2 and 3 injuries, and occasionally for grade 1 injuries.

## Why does this matter?

At Group23, we often see patients frustrated with their symptoms, lack of improvement, and the cost of ineffective treatments, products, and devices. Often the biggest issue we see with a diagnosis is the patient's lack of knowledge of the subject because no one has taken the time to explain what is truly happening! It's not enough to just know the words MCL sprain; it's important to us that you understand what it means!

Now that you know more about MCL sprains, we can address treatment options that support strengthening your muscles and restoring joint range of motion. No matter where you start, you can get to the point of less pain and improved functionality... **IF** you create SMART goals, utilize the options in your Toolkit, and commit to working proactively with your Group23 Health Journey team!

## Our care philosophy

We see treatment choices as a Patient Health Journey, and we take pride in being on this Journey with you the entire way. The most crucial part is becoming an expert and creating Rise Above goals specific to you and your lifestyle. Once your Group23 healthcare team understands your destination, we can accurately create a treatment plan that is fit for you!



Check out a free lifestyle assessment, available with the Health & Wellness team!



Surgery is a possibility, but a last resort option in the case of MCL sprains. We have a whole Toolkit of other options to try first!



Becoming an expert and setting a SMART goal ensures every treatment decision reflects your priorities, not ours!



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