

## Child health information factsheet

### Arthroscopy

**An arthroscopy is the examination of a joint and its structures.**

A joint is made up of bone ends, ligaments that attach bones to other bones, tendons that attach muscles to bones, cartilage which protects the bone ends and a special lubricating fluid (synovial fluid).

An arthroscopy is an investigation that gives the surgeon information about the problem in the joint, for example, a torn ligament.

Two small incisions (cuts) are made and a special camera with a light is inserted into the joint. The surgeon looks through this to see what structures are damaged.

Sometimes this can be repaired at the same time, this is called arthroscopic surgery, or another operation may be needed to treat the problem.

Your child will need to come into hospital on the day of surgery and will not need to stay overnight. They will need a general anaesthetic (medicine given to make you go to sleep) for this procedure.

Your child should not have anything to eat or milky drinks six hours before the operation.

They can have water to drink up to two hours before the operation.

#### After care

The incisions are closed with steristrips (paper stitches) and a pressure bandage will be put around the joint.

For an arthroscopy of the ankle or knee your child will usually be able to walk putting their full weight through the affected limb but may need crutches for support. When sitting down your child should have their leg raised.

The bandage can be removed after 48 hours and normal movement of the limb is encouraged. The steristrips can be soaked off in the bath or shower ten days after the operation.

#### Possible complications

The healthcare team will make your child's stay in hospital and the treatment they receive as safe as possible. However complications can happen. You should ask the healthcare team if there is anything you do not understand.

The anaesthetist will be able to discuss with you the possible complications of your child having an anaesthetic.

Pain relieving medicine will be given as prescribed by the anaesthetist or the doctor.

Bleeding can happen during or after surgery and there will be scarring as a result of the surgical cut.

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If the surgical wound becomes infected it will usually settle with antibiotics but may sometimes need further surgery.

There may be altered feeling at the operation site, this may be temporary or permanent.

## Specific complications

It may take a couple of weeks for swelling of the knee or around the incision to go down.

## If you have any questions or concerns please contact

Julia Judd and Liz Wright advanced nurse practitioners: **023 8079 4991**

Switchboard: **023 8077 7222** bleep **2641**

Ward G3: **023 8079 4852**

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