

Discoid Meniscus



What is a Discoid Meniscus?

The meniscus is a **C-shaped piece of cartilage** in the knee that cushions and stabilizes the joint.

A **discoid meniscus** is a **thicker, disk-shaped meniscus** instead of the usual crescent shape.

- It is usually **congenital (present from birth)**
- Can affect **children and adolescents**
- Most children with a discoid meniscus **do not have symptoms**, but some develop pain or knee problems

Symptoms

Children may experience:

- **Knee pain** (often outer side)
- **Swelling or stiffness**

- **Clicking, popping, or snapping** during movement
- **Locking** (knee gets stuck) or **giving way**
- Reduced range of motion

Symptoms often worsen with sports, running, or twisting movements.

Causes

- Discoid meniscus is **present at birth**
- Symptoms arise if the meniscus **tears or gets caught** during activity
- Overuse, twisting, or direct trauma may trigger symptoms

Diagnosis

- Clinical assessment by a **paediatric orthopaedic specialist or physiotherapist**
- **MRI** is the gold standard to confirm discoid meniscus and detect any tear
- X-rays may be used to rule out other knee conditions

Treatment

1. Non-Surgical Management

- For mild or occasional symptoms:
 - Activity modification (avoid twisting or high-impact sports temporarily)
 - **Ice: 10–15 minutes after activity**
 - Physiotherapy to strengthen thigh and hip muscles
 - Pain relief: paracetamol or ibuprofen (as advised)

2. Surgical Management

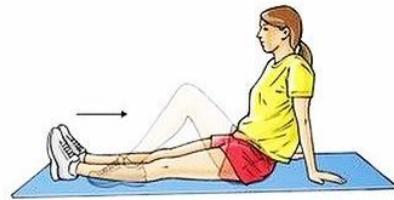
- If there is **persistent pain, locking, or mechanical symptoms**, surgery may be recommended:
 - **Partial meniscectomy or meniscus repair**
 - Aim: relieve symptoms and preserve meniscus for long-term knee health

Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation

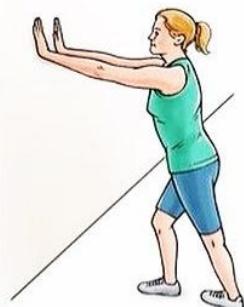
- Strengthen **quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, and core muscles**
- Improve **knee stability and balance**
- Gradual **return to sport** after surgery, guided by physiotherapist



Passive knee extension



Heel slide



Standing calf stretch



Hamstring stretch on wall



Straight leg raise



Prone hip extension



Clam exercise



Wall squat with a ball

Prevention & Care

- Encourage **safe movement patterns** in sports
- Warm up and stretch before activity
- Avoid repetitive twisting or pivoting if symptomatic
- Monitor knee for pain, swelling, or clicking

Prognosis

- Many children remain **asymptomatic** throughout life
- Symptomatic discoid meniscus usually **responds well** to physiotherapy or surgical treatment
- Early diagnosis and management reduce the risk of **long-term knee problems**

When to Seek Medical Advice

- Persistent knee pain or swelling
- Locking or catching of the knee
- Limp or difficulty walking
- Pain affecting sports participation
- Uncertainty about knee injury