

Meniscus tear Management

Adjudication Guideline

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Medical

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1. Abstract

1.1 For Members

The meniscus is a piece of cartilage that provides a cushion between your femur (thighbone) and tibia (shinbone). There are two menisci in each knee. They can be damaged or torn during activities that put pressure on or rotate the knee joint.

1.2 For Medical Professionals

Acute meniscal tears occur most often from twisting injuries; chronic degenerative tears occur in older patients and can occur with minimal twisting or stress. Tears are classified as partial or complex; anterior, lateral, or posterior; traumatic or degenerative; and horizontal, vertical, radial, "parrot-beak," or "bucket handle."

2. Scope

This guideline specifies the coverage details for the management of meniscus tears for all the health insurance plans administered by Daman

Types of tears:

1. Acute tears occur most frequently result by a twisting injury to the knee when the foot is planted more commonly in athletes.
2. Chronic degenerative tears are more gradual and more common in elderly.

Imaging Methods:

1. MRI – gold standard
2. Plain radiographs
3. CT – If MRI is contraindicated

Management:

Treatment options for meniscal tears are either operative or non-operative. The management of meniscal tears depends upon the type of tear (e.g. intrasubstance, horizontal, or vertical), the presence of significant mechanical symptoms, and the presence of persistent knee effusions.

Small intrasubstance and vertical tears that cause infrequent symptoms and do not interfere with general knee function can be managed medically with pain medication,

rest, activity restriction, and physical therapy. Clinicians should try to exhaust conservative management options before referring such patients for surgery.

Surgical options include partial or total meniscectomy and repair of the meniscal tear. Open or arthroscopic surgery can be performed.

3. Adjudication Policy

3.1 Eligibility / Coverage Criteria

Surgical management may be considered medically necessary for acute meniscal tear when ALL the following 3 criteria are met:

1. Clinical documentation confirms the presence of a meniscus tear.

AND

2. Diagnostic imaging (MRI) demonstrates a torn or displaced meniscus, or CT if MRI is contraindicated.

AND

3. Either
 - Justification for immediate surgery,

OR

 - 6 weeks of conservative care has been tried and failed (e.g., PT, activity modification, oral analgesics).

Degenerative tears

Current evidence suggests that meniscectomy has no added benefit compared with non-surgical management in non-obstructive degenerative meniscal disease. In patients 50 years and older and imaging shows the presence of severe arthritis (i.e. large osteophytes, marked narrowing of joint space, severe sclerosis and definite deformity of bone contour),

Surgical management may be considered medically necessary if 12 months of conservative care has been tried and failed (e.g., PT, activity modification, oral analgesics). If the clinician thinks otherwise, they should provide all the justification for immediate surgery.

3.2 Requirements for Coverage

Please see coverage criteria section

3.3 Non-Coverage

Daman does not cover any treatment of meniscus tears for the Visitors Plan.

3.4 Payment and Coding Rules

Code to the highest level of specificity.

4. Denial Codes

Code	Code Description
MNEC-003	Service is not clinically indicated based on good clinical practice
MNEC-004	Service is not clinically indicated based on good clinical practice, without additional supporting diagnoses/activities
MNEC-005	Service /supply may be appropriate, but too frequent
NCOV-003	Service(s) is (are) not covered
AUTH-001	Prior approval is required and was not obtained
CODE-010	Activity/diagnosis inconsistent with clinician speciality

5. Appendices

Questionnaire:

<https://www.damanhealth.ae/main/pdf/support/Questionnaire/SurgicalmanagementofmeniscustearsQuestionnaire.pdf>

5.1 References

- <http://www.dynamed.com/topics/dmp~AN~T116776/Meniscus-tears#Testing-overview>
- https://www.uptodate.com/contents/meniscal-injury-of-the-knee?search=meniscus%20tear&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~55&usage_type=default&display_rank=1
- <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/90661-overview>
- <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/meniscus-tears>
- <https://www.aaos.org/globalassets/quality-and-practice-resources/acute-meniscal-pathology/amp-cpg.pdf>

5.2 Revision History

Date	Change(s)
09/05/2019	Version 1.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of Adjudication Guideline-External Instruction Template.
24/12/2024	Version 2.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> References updated General Content and Template review
04/06/2025	Version 3.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed as per the system requirements Recent references added

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