

Arthroscopy- least invasive treatment option for the joints

WHAT IS ARTHROSCOPY?

Arthroscopy is keyhole surgery to the joint. The word arthroscopy is derived from the Greek terms 'arthro' (relating to joints) and 'scopy' ('looking into'). It is one of the least invasive procedures performed using endoscopes that are inserted into the concerned joint through one or two small incisions. Surgeons view the joint area on a video monitor and determine the type of injury and then sort out the problem.

WHO CAN ALL BE TREATED WITH ARTHROSCOPY?

Arthroscopic surgery is gaining importance and is a common procedure for most joint injuries today. It is an ideal surgical option for the general populace as well as sportspeople because it isolates the surgery only to the injured area, leaving the healthy bone and soft tissue intact. Less pain, less joint stiffness and a shorter recovery time make arthroscopy an appealing choice for anyone eager to return to active life. It can be performed on patients of any age group. The procedure can be done under general, spinal or regional anaesthesia based on the site of the injury.

WHICH JOINTS ARE AMENABLE TO ARTHROSCOPY?

Arthroscopy can be performed on many parts of the body like the shoulder, wrist, elbow, hip, knee and ankle, but it is most commonly performed on the shoulder (to treat rotator cuff tears, instability or recurrent dislocations of the shoulder) and knee (ACL/PCL, meniscus and cartilage procedures, other ligament injuries). Arthroscopy is not just a treatment procedure. It can be diagnostic and can supplant non-invasive imaging techniques.

HOW IS ARTHROSCOPY DONE?

The surgeon makes a small incision called a 'portal' in the patient's skin and then inserts an arthroscope which has a lens and a light source to magnify and illuminate the structures within the joint. The size of the arthroscope varies depending on the size of the joint under evaluation. Light is transmitted through fibre optics to the end of the arthroscope. By attaching the scope to a camera, the surgeon can see inside the joint as the image is displayed on a monitor. Arthroscopes of ultra-high definition



Arthroscopic ACL reconstruction of knee joint

4K and 7K resolution are available in the market at present.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF ARTHROSCOPY OVER CONVENTIONAL SURGERY?

Compared to open surgery, arthroscopic procedures have multiple advantages. Arthroscopic surgeries are cosmetically better due to small incisions and are associated with lesser blood loss, faster recovery, faster healing and shorter hospital stay. Arthroscopy may be performed as a daycare surgery so patients can return home on the same day and it typically involves less use of pain medications. The complication rates, including those of infections and neuro-vascular injuries, are much lower compared to open surgery. Once more, the cost of the operation is far lower than traditional surgery. To sum up, arthroscopy has many advantages over traditional surgical methods. These include: smaller incisions, fewer scars, least invasive procedure, less bleeding, faster recovery time, less post-surgery pain, shorter hospital stay, economically viable and fewer complications



Dr Nijith Ompedathil Govindan
Consultant Joint Replacement,
Arthroscopy and Sports Surgeon
Lakshmi Hospital Cochin
Ph 9745601731
drnijith@gmail.com
www.miocortho.com

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