Knee Scope

The menisci structures are made of cartilage that act as “shock absorbers” by spreading the load within the knee joint. Unfortunately, tears can occur within them with resultant pain or locking of the knee. These tears can be the result of sporting injuries or become more common with increasing age as the tissues lose their elasticity.

Knee arthroscopies or “scopes” are an excellent way of addressing these tears and allow trimming and smoothing of the torn cartilage. If the tear is large and is suitable for repair, then this can also be performed. Other conditions such as tears or defects in the joint surface or removal loose bodies can also be dealt with.

Knee scopes are day procedures and are usually performed under a general anaesthetic. The actual procedure usually takes around 20 minutes with two small “key-hole” incisions which allow a camera to be placed within the knee and an instrument to be introduced that can address the pathology.

Patients are able to walk after the procedure and take 1-2 weeks off work. It usually takes 3-6 weeks to fully recover from a knee scope.

As with all surgical procedures, it is important to discuss the aims of surgery, benefits, as well as the possible risks.

Complications following surgery are rare however may include:

- Anaesthetic problems
- Bleeding into the joint.
- Blood clots.
- Injury to blood vessels or nerves.
- Swelling of the leg resulting from decreased blood flow.
- Post-operative infection.
- Very rarely, a knee ligament or cartilage may be slightly injured during surgery; this problem should heal without any further complication.

Arthroscopy in general has a very low complication rate and it has certainly decreased problems overall compared to open surgery.

The experienced and cautious surgical team uses special techniques to minimize all the above risks. Adverse events following knee surgery are extremely rare, but they cannot be completely eliminated.
Knee Scope - After care

Post operative:
Most patients go home a couple of hours after the procedure. You will note a 
bandage around the knee which covers water-proof dressings. I usually do not 
use stitches. Local anaesthetic is usually used so the knee is fairly comfortable in 
this period. It is normal to expect pain at night and you will be sent home with 
analgesics to cope with this. You are allowed to weight bear as tolerated and may 
require crutches. You will be given instructions for exercises and may be seen by a 
physiotherapist who will take you through these.

Week 1
My instructions are to take the bandage off after 3 days but leave the dressings 
intact. You are allowed to shower with these on, as the dressings are waterproof. 
There may be some blood-staining of the pads on the dressings- this is normal.

The dressings often fall off after 7-10 days.

Expect swelling and discomfort in the knee for up to 3-6 weeks post knee scope. 
Most patients find that their activity level increases significantly at the 3 week mark 
but may note that the knee responds to exercise with some inflammation (swelling).

Review
I will review you 2-3 weeks post-operation to discuss the findings of the procedure in 
detail, as well as to check that the knee is progressing well.