

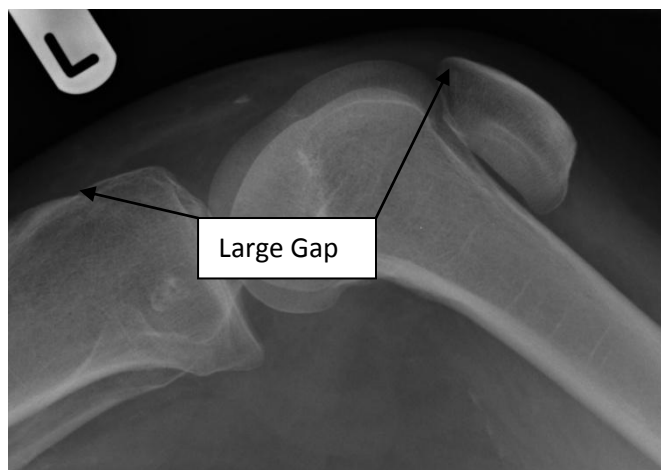
Patella Tendon Rupture

The patella tendon is a large tendon joins the patella (knee cap) to the tibia (shin bone). By joining the patella to the tibia it allows the knee to be straightened when the quadriceps muscle (above the patella at the front of the thigh) contracts and pulls on the patella.

Rupture of the patella tendon occurs usually in middle age. It affects men more often than women. There is usually no warning that the patella tendon is going to rupture.

The usual way that the tendon ruptures is by the quadriceps muscle pulling very hard and the knee not able to straighten. This usually occurs when jumping or falling onto a flexed knee.

The knee becomes very painful and you are unable to straighten the knee without using your hands. It requires an immediate attendance at Accident & Emergency. Here your knee will be examined and an X-ray taken. The X-ray will show an increased gap between the tibia and the patella.



Treatment is with surgery to repair the tendon. This does not have to be done that day but will be done within the first few days. This repair is sometimes protected with a strong suture that is passed through holes drilled in the patella and tibia. This may require removing with another operation at a later date.

After the patella tendon has been repaired the knee is rested in a splint for 6 weeks. This is followed by a course of physiotherapy to regain the movement and strength within the knee.

Rarely does the knee return to “Normal”. The knee is often left with a little less movement than before, along with a smaller quadriceps muscle and less power.