

# Meniscus Tears Are Common in Car Accidents

## This Painful Knee Injury Can Affect Every Aspect of Your Life

[Car accidents](#) often bring to mind back injuries, whiplash, or head trauma. While these are serious concerns, many people overlook knee injuries, which can be just as devastating. Among these, meniscus tears stand out as one of the most common and disruptive injuries after a crash. A torn meniscus may seem like a minor issue at first, but it can quickly turn into a long-lasting problem that impacts every part of your life, from walking and working to enjoying time with your family.

At [Smith & Hassler](#), our Houston car accident lawyers have seen how knee injuries like meniscus tears can turn daily activities into painful challenges. We understand the physical, emotional, and financial strain that follows these injuries. That is why we fight to hold negligent drivers accountable and pursue full compensation for clients coping with serious knee damage.

## How a Meniscus Tear Happens in a Car Accident

The [meniscus](#) is a C-shaped piece of cartilage that acts as a shock absorber between your thigh bone (femur) and shin bone (tibia). Each knee has two menisci, which help distribute weight across the joint and keep your knee stable. When these tough pieces of cartilage tear, the joint becomes less stable and more prone to further damage.

In a car accident, the forces placed on your body can twist or compress your knee in unnatural ways. Some common crash scenarios that lead to meniscus tears include:

- Bracing against the floorboard or dashboard right before impact, which can place extreme pressure on your knee joint.
- Twisting during a side-impact collision if your foot stays planted while the rest of your body is thrown sideways.
- Direct impact to the knee from hitting the dashboard, steering column, or door.

Even in low-speed crashes, the sudden stop can cause your leg to move in ways it is not meant to, leading to a painful meniscus injury.

## What Are the Signs of a Torn Meniscus?

A torn meniscus does not always cause immediate, severe pain. Sometimes, people walk away from an accident with mild discomfort, only to notice increased pain, swelling, or instability in the days that follow. This is why it's important to pay attention to any knee symptoms after a car crash.

Some common signs of a meniscus tear include:

- Pain in the knee joint, especially when twisting or rotating

- Swelling that develops over hours or days
- A popping sensation at the time of injury
- Stiffness or limited range of motion
- The feeling that your knee is catching, locking up, or giving way

Ignoring these symptoms can lead to more damage. A torn meniscus that does not heal properly can increase your risk of developing arthritis in the knee, leading to chronic pain and permanent limitations.

## **How Doctors Diagnose and Treat Meniscus Tears**

If you experience knee pain after a car accident, consulting a doctor promptly is critical. Your doctor will likely perform a physical exam to check for tenderness, swelling, and stability. Imaging tests, such as an MRI, are often necessary to confirm a meniscus tear and assess its severity.

Treatment depends on the size and location of the tear, your age, activity level, and whether other structures in the knee are also injured. Some small tears on the outer edge of the meniscus may heal with rest, ice, compression, elevation, and physical therapy. However, many meniscus tears do not heal on their own because the cartilage has a poor blood supply.

When conservative treatments are ineffective or the tear is severe, doctors may recommend arthroscopic surgery. During this procedure, a surgeon inserts small instruments through tiny incisions to trim or repair the damaged cartilage. Recovery from surgery can take several weeks to several months, often involving extensive rehabilitation to restore strength and range of motion.

## **The Real Impact of a Meniscus Tear on Your Life**

Many people do not realize the extent to which a knee injury can impact their day-to-day life until they experience it firsthand. A torn meniscus can limit your ability to walk, climb stairs, drive, or even stand for long periods. If your job involves physical work, you might be unable to return for an extended period, or you may have to find a different line of work altogether.

Beyond the physical toll, knee injuries also take an emotional and financial one. You might struggle with feelings of frustration or anxiety about whether your knee will ever feel normal again. Meanwhile, medical bills, therapy costs, and lost income can quickly add up.

Our attorneys at Smith & Hassler understand these challenges. We believe injured people deserve compensation that fully accounts for their losses, not just what the insurance company offers to pay.

## **Why Insurance Companies Often Undervalue Knee Injury Claims**

Insurance companies are in the business of paying as little as possible on claims. Even when there is clear evidence of injury, they often argue that a meniscus tear is a minor problem or try to blame it on age-related degeneration. It is true that many adults have some degree of wear in their knee cartilage, but this does not mean a car accident did not worsen the condition or cause a new tear.

Insurers also like to downplay future medical needs. They may offer a quick settlement before you know whether you will require surgery or long-term therapy. Accepting this kind of offer too soon can leave you stuck paying for treatments out of pocket down the road.

That is why it is so important to have an experienced car accident lawyer on your side. At Smith & Hassler, we build strong cases supported by medical records, expert opinions, and detailed documentation of how your injury affects your work and quality of life. This helps us push back against lowball offers and demand fair compensation.

### **What Compensation Can Cover After a Meniscus Tear**

If someone else caused the crash that led to your knee injury, you have the right to seek damages for all the ways the injury has affected you. This may include:

- **Medical expenses**, from the initial ER visit to follow-up care, MRIs, surgery, and physical therapy
- **Future medical costs**, especially if doctors believe you will need additional procedures or long-term treatment
- **Lost income**, for the time you were unable to work while recovering
- **Loss of earning capacity**, if your knee injury limits the kind of work you can do in the future
- **Pain and suffering**, for the physical pain and emotional stress caused by the injury
- **Loss of enjoyment of life**, if you can no longer participate in activities you once loved

Our job is to make sure no aspect of your losses is overlooked. We prepare every case as if it will go to trial, ensuring we are fully prepared to fight for the maximum value of your claim.

### **What to Do if You Think You Have a Meniscus Tear After a Car Accident**

Taking the right steps after a car accident can protect both your health and your legal claim. If you suspect a knee injury:

- **Get medical care right away.** Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent further damage and create a clear link between the accident and your meniscus injury.
- **Follow your doctor's recommendations.** Attend all appointments, complete therapy programs, and keep copies of your medical records.

- **Document how your meniscus injury impacts you.** Keep a journal describing your pain levels, struggles with daily tasks, and any missed activities or events.
- **Avoid discussing your case with the insurance company.** They might try to get you to downplay your injury or admit fault. Let your attorney handle these conversations.
- **Call an experienced car accident lawyer.** Having a skilled attorney on your side from the start can make all the difference in getting the compensation you truly deserve.

### **Talk to a Houston Car Accident Lawyer About Your Meniscus Tear**

A torn meniscus is not just a sore knee. It is a serious injury that can change how you live and work. At Smith & Hassler, we have spent more than three decades helping injured Texans stand up to insurance companies and recover the compensation they deserve.

Our dedicated legal team is ready to listen to your story, explain your rights, and guide you through every step of the process. We also handle cases on a [contingency fee basis](#), so you pay nothing unless we win your case.

[Contact us today](#) to schedule a free consultation with a Houston car accident lawyer who understands knee injuries and knows how to fight for your future. Let us help you take the next step toward recovery.