

## Arthroscopic Articular Cartilage Repair (Ankle)



### Overview

This minimally-invasive procedure is performed to stimulate the growth of fibrocartilage in an injured joint. Fibrocartilage is a tough, dense, fibrous material that can fill in areas where smooth, glassy cartilage has become damaged or worn away. This procedure may be performed with general or regional anesthesia.

### Expanding the Joint

In preparation for the procedure, the patient is positioned and anesthesia is administered. Fluid is injected to expand the ankle to provide a clear view of the joint. The surgeon makes a series of tiny openings in the ankle to access the joint. The surgeon inserts an arthroscopic camera and instruments into these openings.

### Inspection

The surgeon locates and inspects the damaged area with the arthroscope. The surgeon uses arthroscopic instruments to clear away the damaged cartilage. This exposes the surface of the bone beneath the injury.

### Stimulating Cartilage Growth

Using an awl, a small drill or a burr, the surgeon creates tiny holes or abrasions on the bone's surface. This stimulates bleeding, increasing blood flow to the area. It triggers a healing response by the body. Fibrocartilage will gradually form at the injured area, creating a natural repair.

### End of Procedure and Aftercare

When the procedure is complete, the surgeon removes the arthroscope and instruments and closes the openings in the skin. The patient will be able to return home after a short monitoring period. Following surgery, the ankle may be sore and swollen for four to six weeks. Some patients may wear a walking cast or splint. Others may require crutches for a few weeks. The ankle will heal over a period of months. Physical therapy may be needed.

