

**RACHEL – RECIPIENT OF:
MENISCUS ALLOGRAFT &
LATERAL FEMORAL CONDYLE OSTEOCHONDRAL ALLOGRAFT**



DONATION COMES FULL CIRCLE FOR TISSUE RECIPIENT TURNED DOCTOR

As a soccer player for the University of Illinois, Rachel constantly pushed herself. Being active was crucial to her lifestyle both on and off the soccer field. She was also passionate about medicine, but didn't know yet that she would eventually be on both sides of the operating table.

After a partial lateral meniscus tear put her on the sidelines, she underwent an arthroscopic partial lateral meniscectomy. She returned to soccer and her pre-injury level of play until she tore her remaining meniscus.

Her pain subsided after an arthroscopic procedure to have the non-viable tissue removed, but then her knee issues returned.

“Being unable to remain physically fit, or lead an active lifestyle, became a huge problem for me,” she said. “As sports and fitness, particularly soccer, were such huge components of my life, I was extremely frustrated with my knee.”



When Rachel met with Dr. Brian Cole of Rush University Medical Center, she learned she was a candidate for a meniscus transplant. Since donor meniscus tissue is matched to the recipient by size, she was placed on a waiting list. Three weeks before starting medical school, she received her match.

In addition to balancing her recovery and a strict physical therapy regimen, Rachel focused on medical school. She also began running again and completed the Chicago Triathlon in 2008.

Throughout the course of medical school, Rachel's experience with allograft transplantation stayed with her and would eventually help shape the course of her career.

“As a direct reflection of my fascination with musculoskeletal function laid against

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the backdrop of my own patient experiences, I pursued a yearlong Orthopaedic Research Fellowship within the Division of Sports Medicine in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Rush University Medical Center,” she explained.

During her research year, Rachel started training for and subsequently completed the Hawaii Half-Ironman. While she was preparing for the race, some of her knee symptoms came back. After the race, she required a revision of the meniscus allograft and received a lateral femoral condyle osteochondral allograft.

“Ever since the revision surgery, I have been functioning at an incredibly high level,” Rachel said.

Now an orthopedic surgery resident at Rush University Medical Center, Rachel works alongside Dr. Cole, the surgeon who helped her heal. Many of her research projects involve allograft applications and her experience as an allograft recipient provides a unique connection to her patients in need of a tissue transplant.

“The allograft has allowed me to be a surgeon, permitting me to stand for over 12 hours in the operating room without thinking about my knee because I have literally no pain or swelling,” she said.



“Before the allograft transplantation, there is no way I would have been able to do this. I am incredibly grateful for my tissue donors and their families. This gift has inspired me to pursue my passion for orthopaedic and sports medicine and to help my future patients the same way Dr. Cole and his team helped me.”

