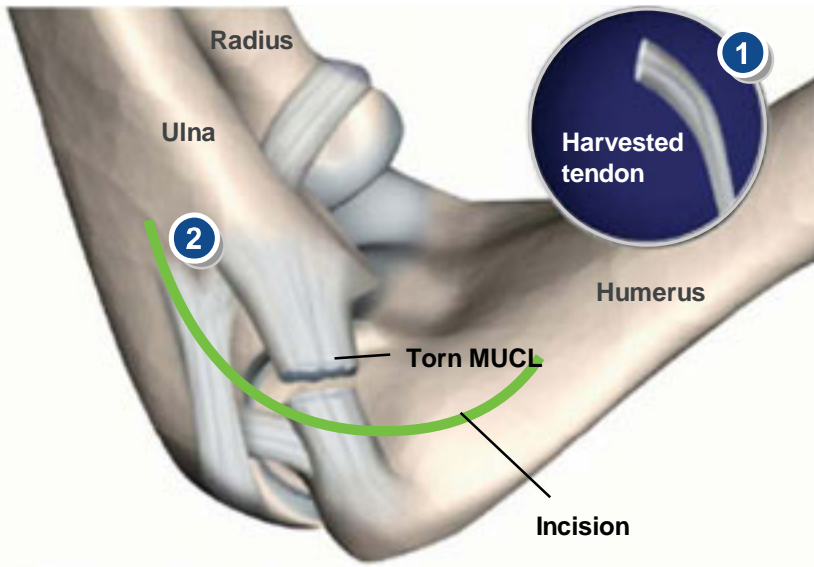


**MEDIAL ULNAR COLLATERAL LIGAMENT RECONSTRUCTION (TOMMY JOHN SURGERY)**



**Overview**

This procedure is designed to repair a torn elbow ligament - an injury typically caused by strong, repetitive overhead throwing motions of the arm or by dislocation of the elbow. It was first performed in 1974 on baseball pitcher Tommy John.

**Preparation**

The surgeon harvests a tendon from the patient's own body. The palmaris longus tendon of the forearm is most frequently used, but the surgeon may instead choose to take a tendon from the hand, wrist or knee. In some cases, a tendon from an organ donor may be used.

**Accessing the Elbow Joint**

The surgeon makes an incision along the inner side of the elbow, exposing the damaged medial ulnar collateral ligament.

**Drilling the Holes**

Tunnels are drilled through the humerus (upper arm bone) and ulna (a lower arm bone) at the points where the damaged ligament normally attaches.

**Inserting the Tendon**

The harvested tendon is looped through the tunnels in a figure-eight pattern. The tendon is sutured to itself, stabilizing the joint.

**End of Procedure**

The incision is closed, and the elbow is immobilized in a hard brace for one to two weeks. The patient may then be allowed to switch to a hinged brace and begin limited exercise of the arm. Supervised throwing may begin at three to four months; competitive throwing may be allowed at six to nine months. Most athletes regain their pre-injury level of function about 12-18 months after surgery.

