

Comeback Community

BEAR® Implant Comeback Story: Kyle, Swimming



Kyle Conboy is a 14-year-old eighth grader currently ranked among the top 10 in the nation for competitive swimming. Two years ago, he tore his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) during a flag football game at school. Given he was only 12 at the time of injury, his parents wanted to avoid ACL reconstruction (ACLR) to preserve his growth plates. They sought out Dr. Sean Keyes, a pediatric orthopedic sports surgeon at AdventHealth for Children in Orlando, Florida, to see what other options might be available to him.

option for children with developing growth plates and how the implant has impacted the way he treats ACL tears today.

Q: How did you tear your ACL?

Kyle: I was playing flag football at school and hyper extended my knee while running and going for a catch. I fell down, and it was painful at first, but I wasn't sure what was wrong so I waited for a month to see if it would heal on its own. But, whenever I would do the breaststroke while swimming or kick off the wall, I was still in a lot of pain. My parents decided to take me to get an MRI, and then I found out I tore my ACL.

Q: Why is the recent FDA approval for the BEAR Implant to expand access to children of all ages like Kyle important?

Dr. Keyes: This expanded indication is significant because ACL reconstruction is often a much more complicated procedure in a growing child than it is in an adult due to their open growth plates, which are the areas of cartilage located at the ends of the femur and tibia that play a critical role in bone growth. The BEAR Implant offers a more natural solution to ACL injuries and works with a child's body as their musculoskeletal system continues to develop without disturbing the open growth plates.

Q. What treatment options did you explore and why did you choose to move forward with the BEAR Implant?

Liska: We knew the options to treat Kyle's ACL tear were limited due to his open growth plates. We went to a few different surgeons to get their opinions, and some gave us the option of waiting until he was older. However, we didn't want to get surgery after his growth plates fused because this could do more damage. My mother is a nurse who had heard about the BEAR Implant and helped us find Dr. Keyes.

Dr. Keyes gave us two options to consider: the BEAR Implant or ACLR with the iliotibial (IT) band. We weighed the pros and cons of both surgeries and ultimately

reduce this risk.

Q: Why was Kyle a good candidate for the BEAR Implant and why do you recommend it for patients like him?

Dr. Keyes: Kyle is a high-level swimmer who was eager to get back into the water. The BEAR Implant was a great option for him because it allowed for faster muscle recovery and no graft morbidity, which could have hampered his ability to swim and compete at a high level.

Q: What led you to start recommending the BEAR Implant as a first choice to your patients, regardless of their age or activity level?

Dr. Keyes: When it comes to clinical decision making on when to do a restoration with the BEAR Implant versus choosing ACL reconstruction, it all comes down to patient selection as well as the patient's anatomy. When discussing surgery options, I tell my patients that if your ACL is repairable, then we will repair it and use the BEAR Implant to help heal the ACL. If the ACL is not repairable, we will work together to choose the back-up graft for reconstruction that is best for what they want to do long-term. I recommend the BEAR Implant for my patients as long as they are good candidates because it allows me to restore the native anatomy and normal kinematics of their knees.

Q: How was the rehab experience?

Kyle: At first, rehab was really hard, especially because I didn't expect it to be as difficult as it was. I didn't know that needing to get range of motion back was a thing, and that was one of the hardest parts for me. I was a little confused at first with all the new exercises, but as I progressed, it got easier and easier. Overall rehab was pretty smooth, and I was mentally strong. The rehab made me stronger mentally because of all the challenges I had to face. My goal was to get my quad and hamstring strength equivalent to each other. In addition to regular PT, I also started swimming in the pool by myself at two months to build my upper body strength. Eventually, I was able to return to competitive swimming nine months after my surgery.

willing to work hard. His swimming coach also encouraged Kyle to use his physical therapy as his training to get back to swimming.

Dr. Keyes: Kyle was like a fish to water. As soon as he could, he was back in the water working his way back to the level he was at before suffering his ACL injury. His competitive edge allowed him to focus on what he needed to do to get better.

Q: Can you tell us about how you first got into competitive swimming? How did your first swim meet go after you were cleared to return to sport?

Kyle: I've been swimming competitively since I was 5 years old. My mom was a swimmer and comes from a family of swimmers. I swim twice a day every day, and swimming is a year-round sport. I started with the 800-meter and 1000-meter events, and eventually the mile events. I tend to gravitate toward longer and challenging events, and I've also taken part in a 5K open water swim in the ocean.

I had a big swim meet for the state of Florida that fell right at the nine-month mark when I was cleared to return to swimming. I felt completely confident in my training and my knee. I wasn't worried about anything going wrong and knew I would have a great meet. I competed in four events and three relays. I surprised myself with how well I swam at that meet. There were over 150 people competing, and I won two of my events and placed second and third in the other two events. Out of the three relay races, we won two and placed second in the third. I was very happy by what I accomplished my first meet back.

Liska: When Kyle took part in that state meet, I was very anxious and wasn't sure what level he would compete at. Once he dove into the water, I could tell he was fully back. This ACL injury has made him tougher and given him more fight. He appreciates swimming even more and has a renewed love for the sport because it was taken away from him while he was in rehab.



Kyle returned to competitive swimming nine months after getting the BEAR Implant.

Q: What differences do you notice in your knee from when you were first cleared to return to sport/activities to where you're at now, two years post-surgery?

Kyle: My BEAR Implant knee feels just as normal as my uninjured knee, and I don't even think about it. I don't have any issues with my knee, and I don't falter in my confidence. My life is exactly the same, and I'm able to do everything I did before my injury.

Q: As a parent, would you recommend the BEAR Implant to others considering ACL surgery options for their child?

Liska: For us, I wouldn't recommend anything other than BEAR Implant for ACL tears, especially for anyone with open growth plates. It may seem overwhelming, but kids are resilient. They come out of this experience tougher than they were prior to surgery.

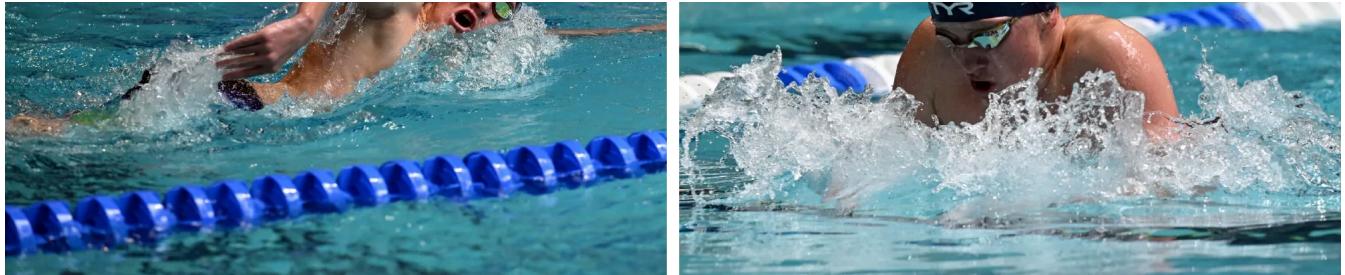
My tip for other parents whose children are recovering from the BEAR procedure is to be prepared for the first day and first month post-surgery being tough. It is also a mental challenge because they will miss their friends and teammates. While Kyle was recovering, we continued to take him to swim meets and practices to check in and spend time with his friends, and this really helped him stay connected.



Kyle is supported by his mom Liska at all his swim meets.

Q: What are some of your future goals?

Kyle: Before my injury I was ranked top 10 in the U.S. in my age group for swimming. After getting the BEAR Implant, I was still able to return to being ranked in the top 10. I plan to swim in high school and college, and my ultimate goal is to make the Olympics. I am continuing to train to get Olympic ready. I swim at least nine times a week and I've also added weightlifting to my daily routine. I'm on a swim team that has very fast swimmers, so it makes for good competitions and gives me motivation to work even harder.



Kyle is committed to swimming 9x a week and training hard to compete in the Olympics one day.

Learn more about the BEAR Implant and find a surgeon

The BEAR Implant is available across the U.S. [Learn more](#) about the BEAR Implant or find a [surgeon](#) in your area. If you're a parent considering the BEAR Implant for your child, [click here](#) for more information.

The BEAR Implant from Miach Orthopaedics was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December 2020. It is indicated for adults, adolescents and children with a complete or partial rupture of the ACL, as confirmed by MRI. Patients must have an ACL stump attached to the tibia to construct the repair. Children with open physes must have sufficient bone in the femoral and tibial epiphyses on either side of the intended tunnel locations to avoid disruption of the growth plates.

It is important to follow the BEAR Implant physical therapy program. Your surgeon can explain the program details.

Be sure to discuss your individual symptoms, diagnosis and treatment with your surgeon. The BEAR Implant has the same potential medical/surgical complications as other orthopedic surgical procedures, including ACL reconstruction. These include the risk of re-tear, infection, knee pain, meniscus injury and limited range of motion.

Visit www.miachortho.com for complete product information, including Instructions for Use.

ML-1281 Rev A 06/2025

RECENT POSTS



Joey's Story: 10-Year-Old Back to Chasing NFL Dreams After BEAR Implant Surgery



BEAR® Implant Comeback Story: Kyle, Swimming



Andrea's Story: Why a Physical Therapist Chose the BEAR® Implant to Return to Snow Ski Racing



BEAR® Implant Comeback Story: Walker, Soccer

© Miach Orthopaedics | All Rights Reserved.