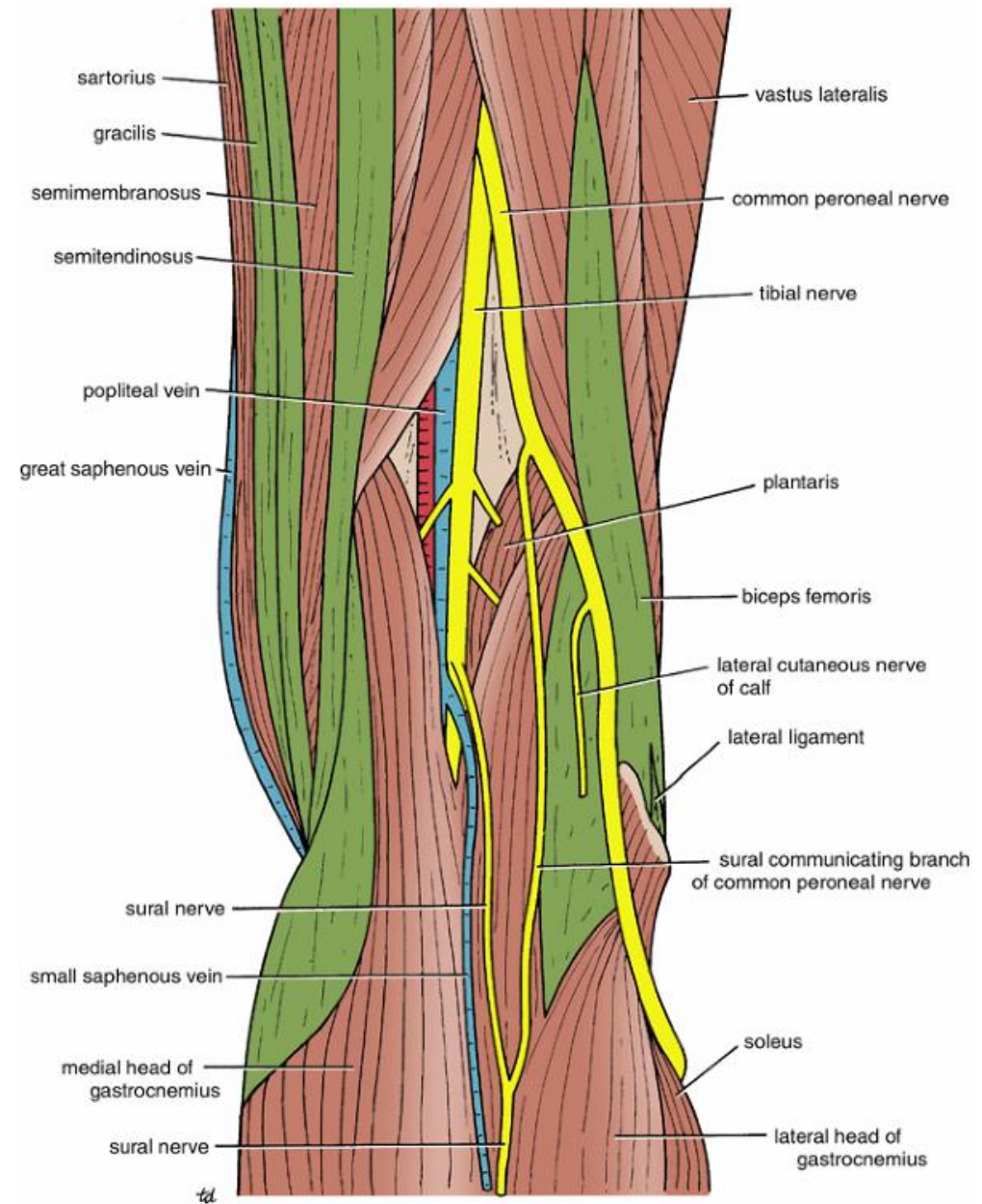


Anatomy of popliteal fossa

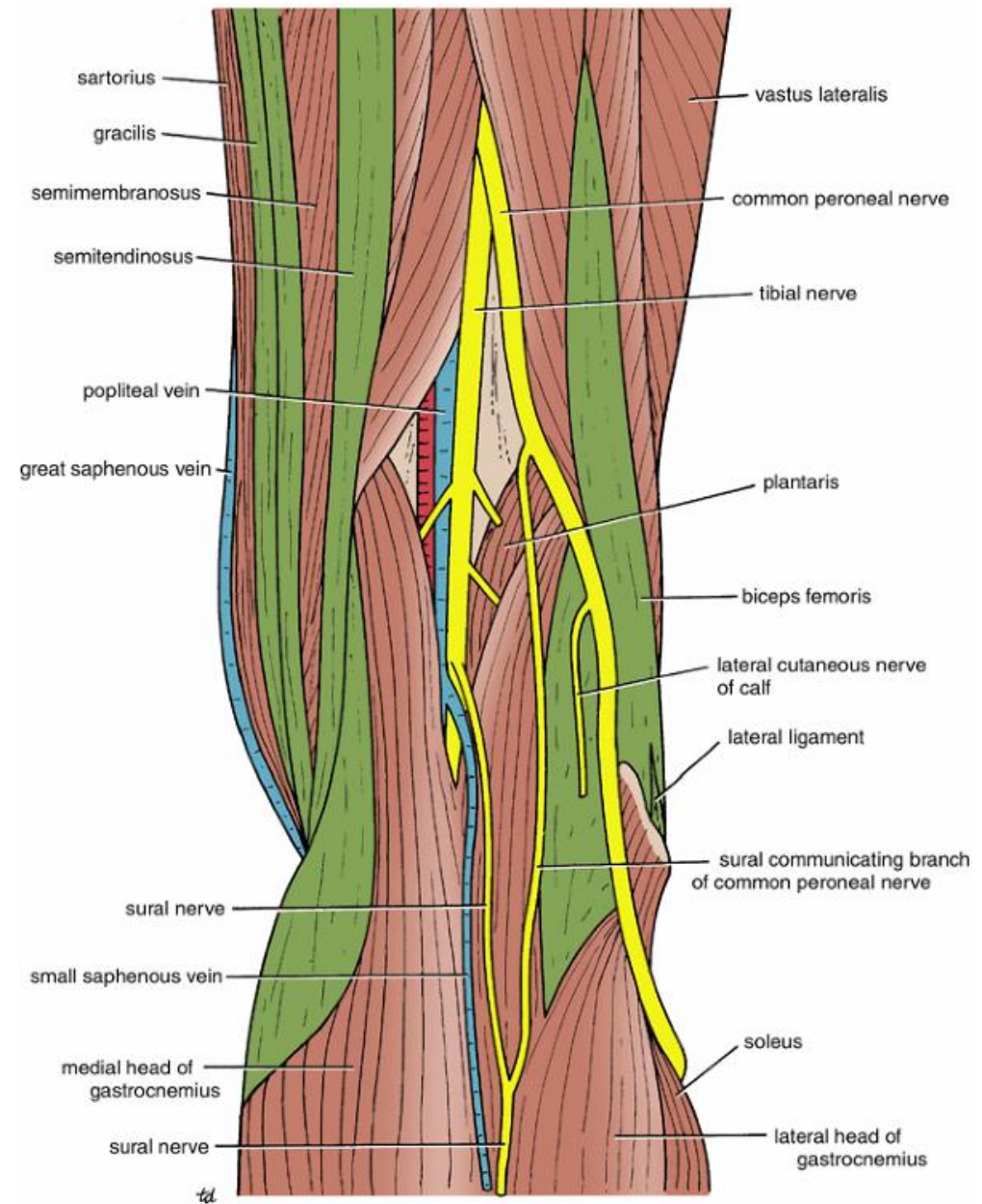
Popliteal Fossa

- The popliteal fossa is a diamond-shaped intermuscular space
- situated at the back of the knee
- The fossa is most prominent when the knee joint is flexed.

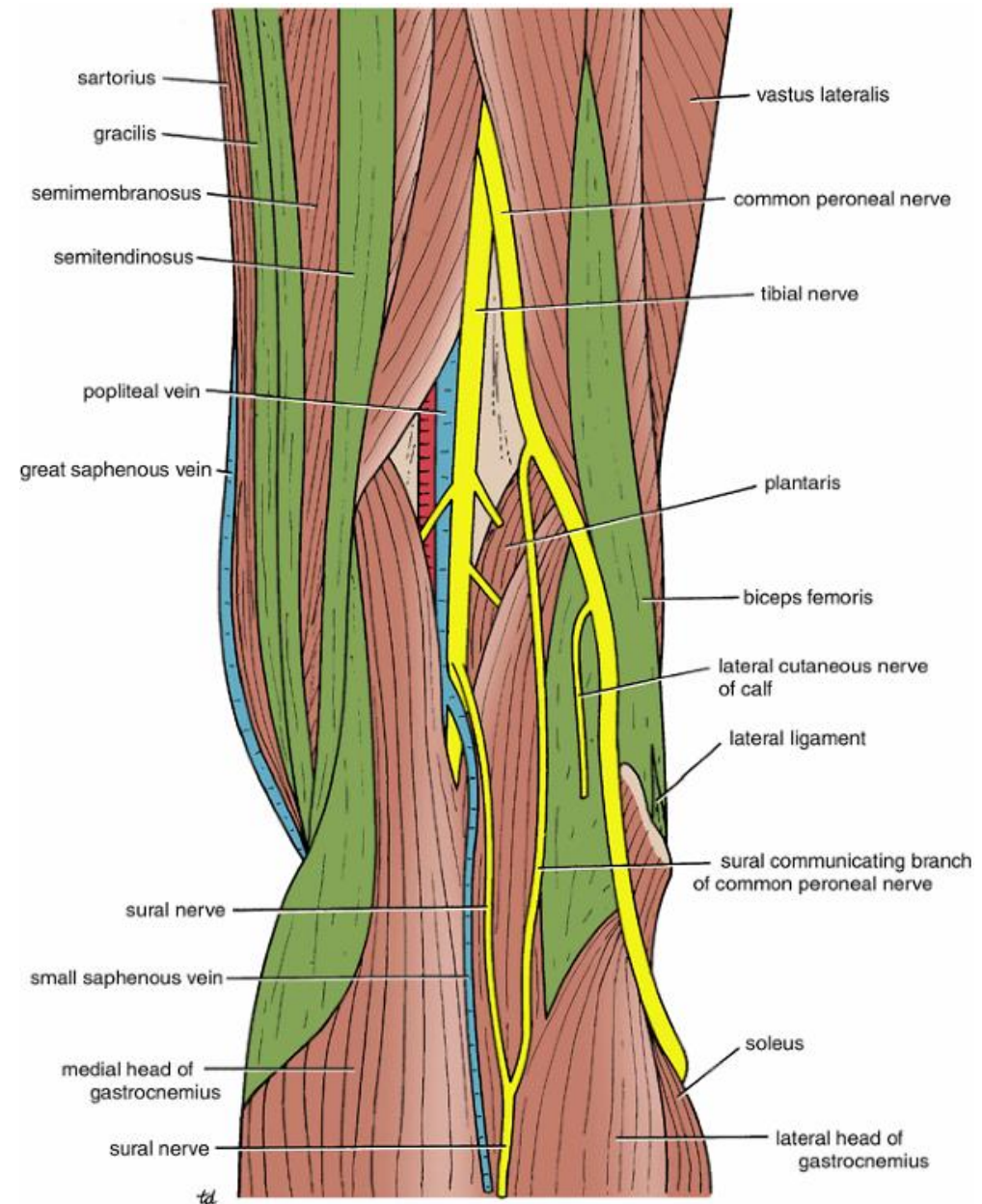


Boundaries

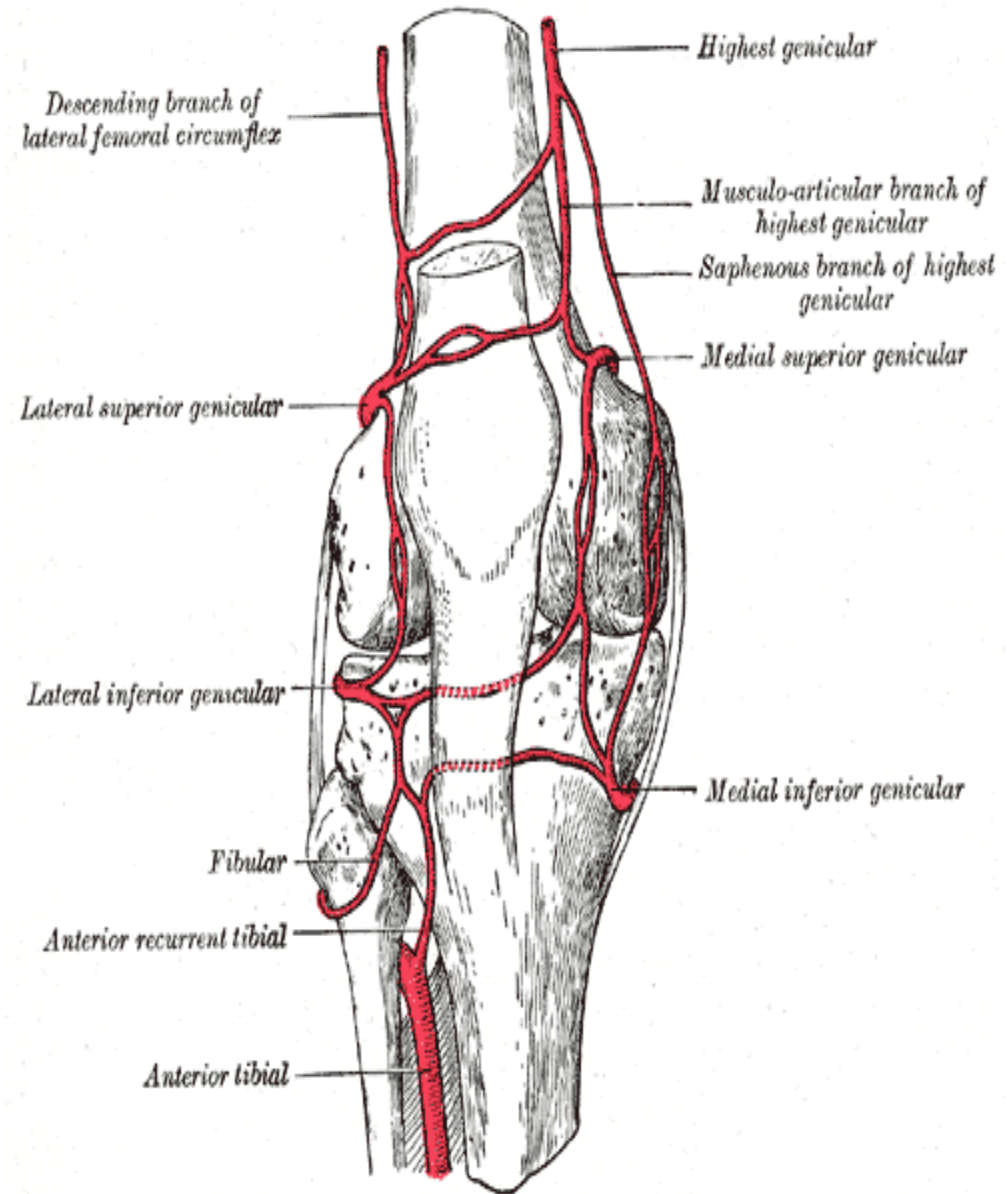
- **Laterally:** The biceps femoris above and the lateral head of the gastrocnemius and plantaris below
-
- **Medially:** The semimembranosus and semitendinosus above and the medial head of the gastrocnemius below
- **The anterior wall or floor** of the fossa is formed by the popliteal surface of the femur, the posterior ligament of the knee joint, and the popliteus muscle
- **The roof** is formed by skin, superficial fascia, and the deep fascia of the thigh.



- **It contains :**
- the popliteal vessels
- the small saphenous vein
- the common peroneal and tibial nerves
- the posterior cutaneous nerve of the thigh
- the genicular branch of the obturator nerve
- connective tissue
- lymph nodes.



- **Arterial Anastomosis Around the Knee Joint:**
- To compensate for the narrowing of the popliteal artery, which occurs during extreme flexion of the knee, around the knee joint is **a profuse anastomosis of small branches of the femoral artery with muscular and articular branches of the popliteal artery and with branches of the anterior and posterior tibial arteries.**



Popliteal vein

Tributaries

- The tributaries of the popliteal vein are as follows:
- Veins that correspond to branches given off by the popliteal artery
- Small saphenous vein, which perforates the deep fascia and passes between the two heads of the gastrocnemius muscle to end in the popliteal vein.

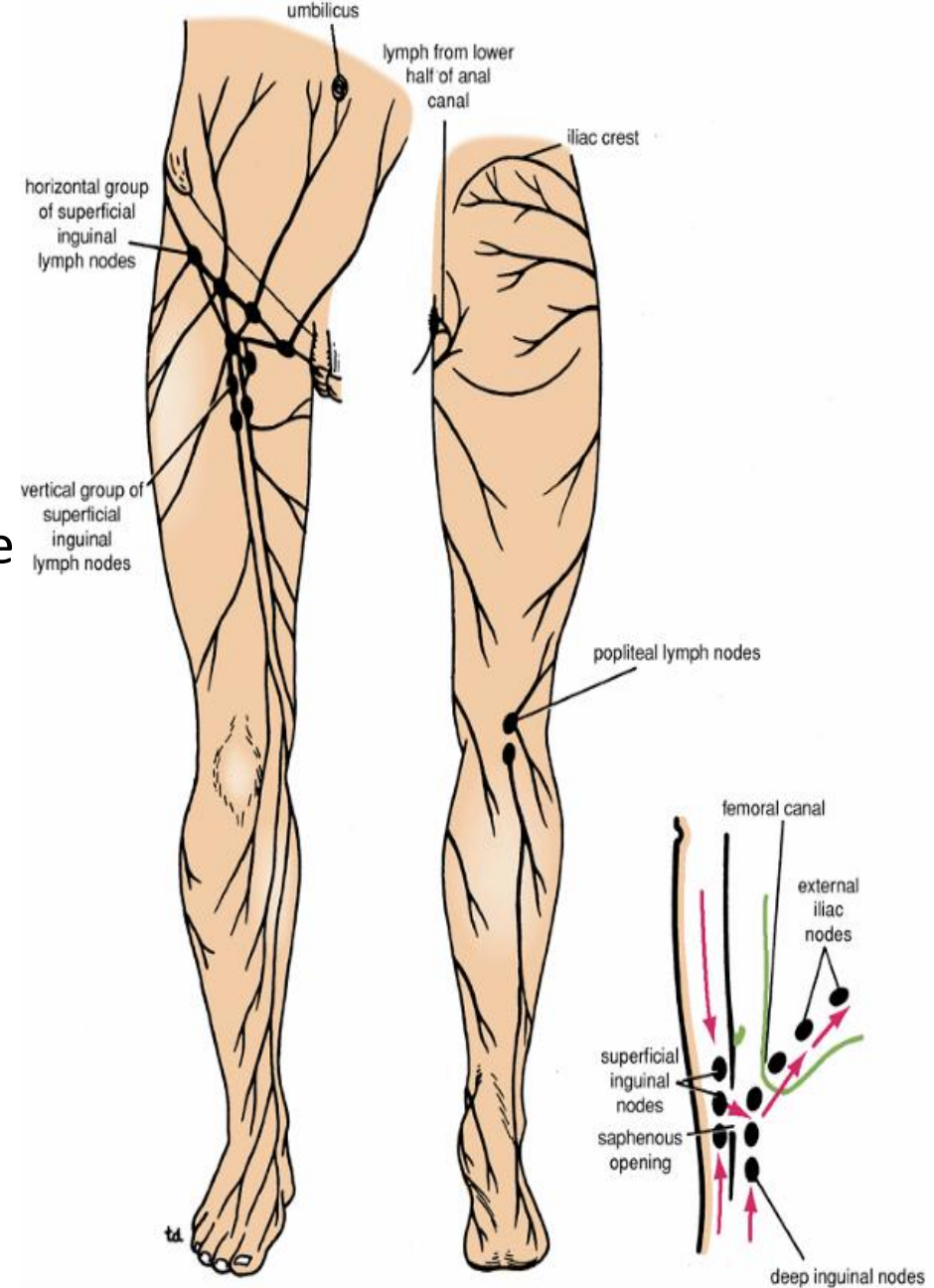
Nerve supply of popliteal fossa : Tibial nerve

Action:

- **Medial rotation** of the tibia on the femur or, if the foot is on the ground, lateral rotation of the femur on the tibia.
- **The latter action** occurs at the commencement of flexion of the extended knee, and its rotatory action slackens the ligaments of the knee joint; this action is sometimes referred to as unlocking the knee joint.
- Because of its attachment to the lateral meniscus, it also pulls the cartilage backward at the commencement of flexion of the knee.

Popliteal Lymph Nodes

- About six lymph nodes are embedded in the fatty connective tissue of the popliteal fossa
- They receive superficial lymph vessels from the lateral side of the foot and leg; these accompany the small saphenous vein into the popliteal fossa.
- They also receive lymph from the knee joint and from deep lymph vessels accompanying the anterior and posterior tibial arteries.



Anatomy and histology

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