

Osteonecrosis of the Knee

Osteonecrosis means cell death of the bone, and it can occur in almost any major joint but one of the more common joints is the knee.

This relatively common contributor to pain in the knees of older women and men happens when there is a segment of bone that loses blood supply and starts to die. More than three times as many women are affected when compared to their male counterparts, most of those over 60 years of age.

Even though the exact cause of the condition isn't known, many think it might be related to a stress fracture combined with trauma, which resulted in the blood supply being altered. Another thought is that there is a fluid build-up within the bones placing pressure on the blood vessels, thus causing a decreased amount of circulation. Many also believe it is just a complication secondary to osteoarthritis of the knee.

Other issues are known to be contributing factors such as lengthy corticosteroid use, alcoholism, and drug abuse.

Osteonecrosis of the Knee Anatomy



How to Treat Osteonecrosis of the Knee:

1. Medication

In the early stages of the disease, medication can help to relieve some of the pain and inflammation associated with this condition. Being able to diminish the amount of pain in the knee means you will be able to get out and move around more.

2. Brace

When the bones rub against one another, it causes an excessive amount of pain in the knee. By using a brace or knee support on the affected knee, it helps to relieve some of the pressure placed on the surface of the joint.

3. Exercise

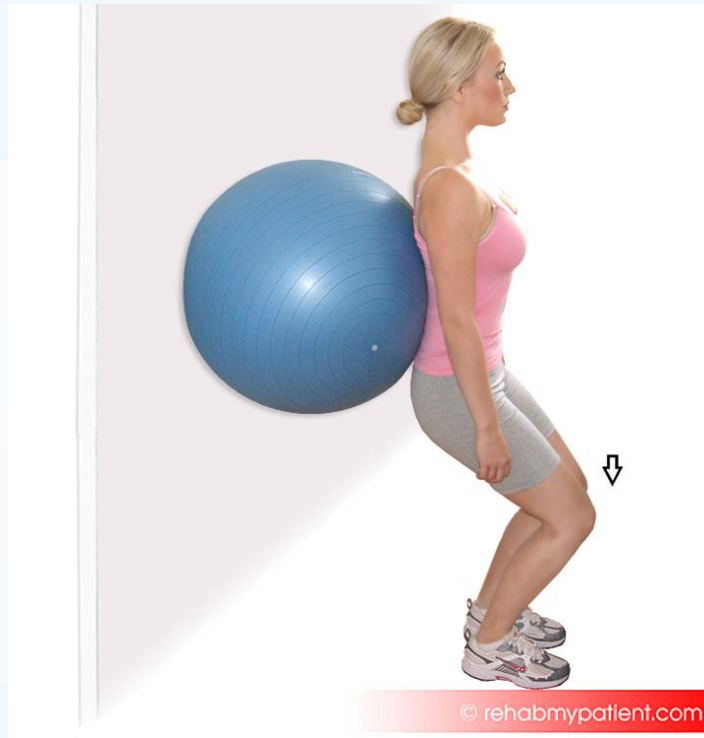
A good conditioning program with exercises that can help to strengthen the muscles in the thigh proves beneficial to relieving some of the pain associated with the condition.

4. Modification of Activities

To help minimize the amount of pain in the knee, you might want to alter some of your activities to those that are going to minimize the force on the bones and joints.

5. Physical Therapy

Consulting with a therapist is generally recommended as they will be able to guide you on what you can and cannot do with exercises and sports, and also work on strengthening the muscles around the joint and improving range of mobility of the joint.



Tips:

- For those who are overweight, losing the excess pounds can help to reduce the amount of pressure on the knee joints.
- If you currently drink a great deal of alcohol, you might want to consider cutting back to help ease the symptoms of osteonecrosis.
- Controlling conditions relating to thalassemia and sickle cell disease can help to prevent osteonecrosis of the knee from forming.
- If you recently fractured bones or went through a major trauma, it leaves you at an increased chance of developing osteonecrosis.
- Younger individuals who have undergone steroid therapy are at an increased chance of getting this condition, while having it affect multiple joints.