

# Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

## Avascular Necrosis – What’s That?

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### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

As all readers know (or should know!) I try extremely hard to avoid medical words that few people understand. But of course there must be a few exceptions. Today is one of them.

Our subject has several different names. Fortunately they all are covered by the same definition. First the names.

They are

Avascular Necrosis

Osteonecrosis

AVN

Aseptic Necrosis

### **What Is It?**

It is a condition (not a disease) in which the blood supply to an area of bone has been decreased causing death of bone cells and marrow cells. Then the bone begins to mechanically fail or collapse.

### **Who Is Affected?**

It is not rare. It affects thousands of Americans each year. Any age can be affected. It is three times more common in women. It is most commonly seen in women and men over 60.

### **Cause**

After all this time no one knows why blood flow to a certain part of the bone is decreased. The exact cause has never been identified.

### **Risk Factors**

Even though we do not know the exact cause, there are several conditions that seem to be connected with avascular necrosis occurring. Medically we call these conditions or situations risk factors. People who develop AVN almost always have one of these.

- Corticosteroid (Cortisone) use even short term
- Excess alcohol intake over time
- Smoking
- Lupus
- Sickle cell anemia
- Organ transplant and immunosuppressive medication
- Excessive weight
- Radiation treatment
- Chemotherapy
- Renal dialysis

## **What Areas Are Affected**

Many different bones can be affected by AVN. The most common in order are:

- Hip. The ball part known as the femoral head
- Knee. The flat area of the knee called the tibial plateau
- Shoulder. Ball part called the humeral head
- Ankle. Rounded part known as the talus
- Wrist. Most often a small carpal bone referred to as the lunate

## **Stage Is Set**

I have given you the elements of AVN to begin your understanding of this very important Orthopaedic condition.

There are three large areas yet to cover. They are symptoms, how I diagnose AVN and of course treatment.

Please remember that anyone can make an appointment to see Dr. Haverbush at his office in Alma, at 315 Warwick Dr., across from Gratiot Medical Center. Call 989-463-6092 to make an appointment.

And don't forget every article I have written for Lakeview Area News is on my Website, [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). Check it out. I specialize in you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush