OSTEOCHONDRITIS DISSECANS

Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) is a lesion that affects a small area of cartilage and/or bone. The cause of this lesion is unknown. Most of them are found in the knee at the end of the thigh bone. About ten percent are found on the undersurface of the kneecap. OCD lesions are 4 times more common in adolescent males than in adolescent females. One in five people who have an OCD on one side will develop an OCD on the other side. Other less common sites for OCD lesions are the elbow and ankle joints

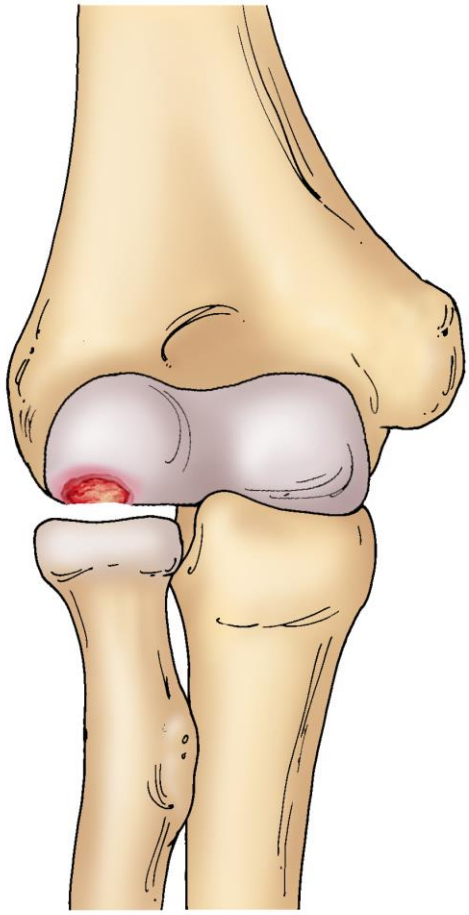
Types: There are three types of OCD lesions based on the status of the growth plate near the lesion.

(1) The juvenile type is found in patients with completely open growth plates. This type has the best potential for healing.

(2) The adolescent type has partial closure of the growth plate and prognosis is unknown because the lesion may act as either the juvenile or adult type.

(3) In the adult type, growth plates are closed and the potential for healing is not as good as the juvenile type.

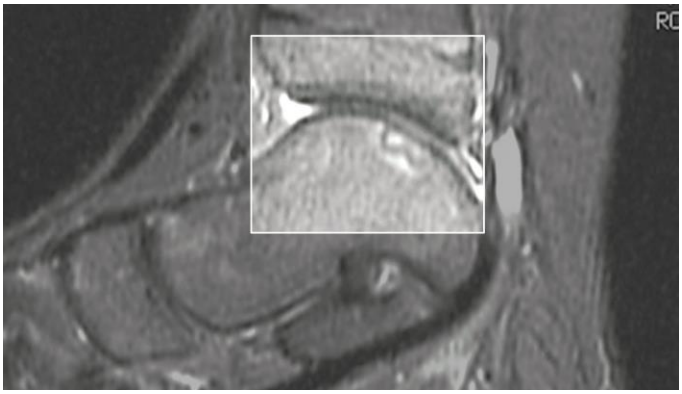
Evaluation: The lesion can usually be seen on regular x-rays. MRI is useful for determining the size of the lesion, whether there is fluid between the cartilage and the bone, and whether there is bone attached to the cartilage. A bone scan can assess blood flow in the area of the OCD, with increased blood flow indicating an increased chance of healing.

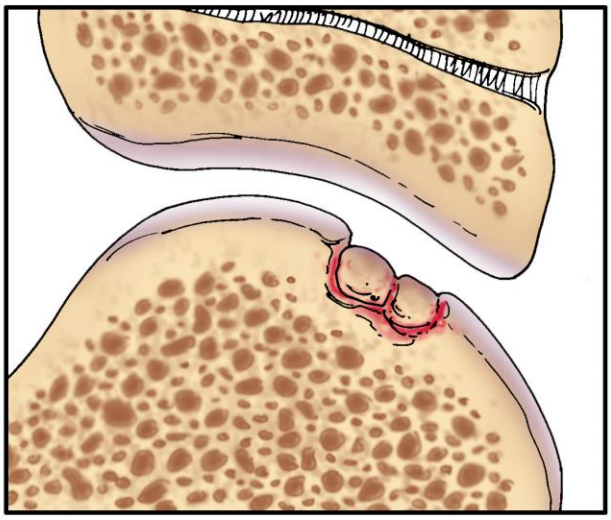


Treatment: The healing potential of an OCD is dependent on many factors. Treatment is influenced by the age of the patient and characteristics of the fragment itself. The outcome depends on the size of the lesion, the location of the lesion, how long the lesion had been present, and whether the lesion is stable or a loose, mobile fragment.

Closed, stable lesions have the best prognosis and usually do well without surgery. Conservative management generally includes activity modification and immobilization when episodes of discomfort or swelling occur.

For lesions that are unstable there are several options for surgical treatment. These include drilling the lesion to promote new growth of blood vessels, opening the knee joint and pinning the fragment in place, or removing the lesion and replacing it with a plug of cartilage and bone from a non-weight bearing part of the knee or growing cartilage cells in the lab and implanting them into the defect.





The goals of surgical treatment are to eliminate the symptoms, halt progression of the lesion, restore the joint surface, and ultimately to prevent osteoarthritis.

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