Avulsion fracture: How is it treated?

What is the best way to treat an avulsion fracture in a young athlete?

Answers from Edward R. Laskowski, M.D.

Most avulsion fractures heal very well without surgical intervention. An avulsion fracture occurs when a small chunk of bone attached to a tendon or ligament gets pulled away from the main part of the bone.

The hip, elbow and ankle are the most common locations for avulsion fractures in the young athlete.

Treatment typically includes resting and icing the affected area, followed by controlled exercises that help restore range of motion, improve muscle strength and promote bone healing. You may need to spend a few weeks on crutches if you have an avulsion fracture around your hip.

If the bone fragment and main bone are too far apart to fuse naturally, surgery may be necessary to reunite them. In children, avulsion fractures that involve the growth plates also might require surgery.

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References

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