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Avascular necrosis

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Definition

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Avascular necrosis is the death of bone tissue due to a lack of blood supply. Also called osteonecrosis, avascular necrosis can lead to tiny breaks in the bone and the bone's eventual collapse.

The blood flow to a section of bone can be interrupted if the bone is fractured or the joint becomes dislocated. Avascular necrosis is also associated with long-term use of high-dose steroid medications and excessive alcohol intake.

Anyone can be affected by avascular necrosis. However, it's most common in people between the ages of 30 and 60. Because of this relatively young age range, avascular necrosis can have significant long-term consequences.

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