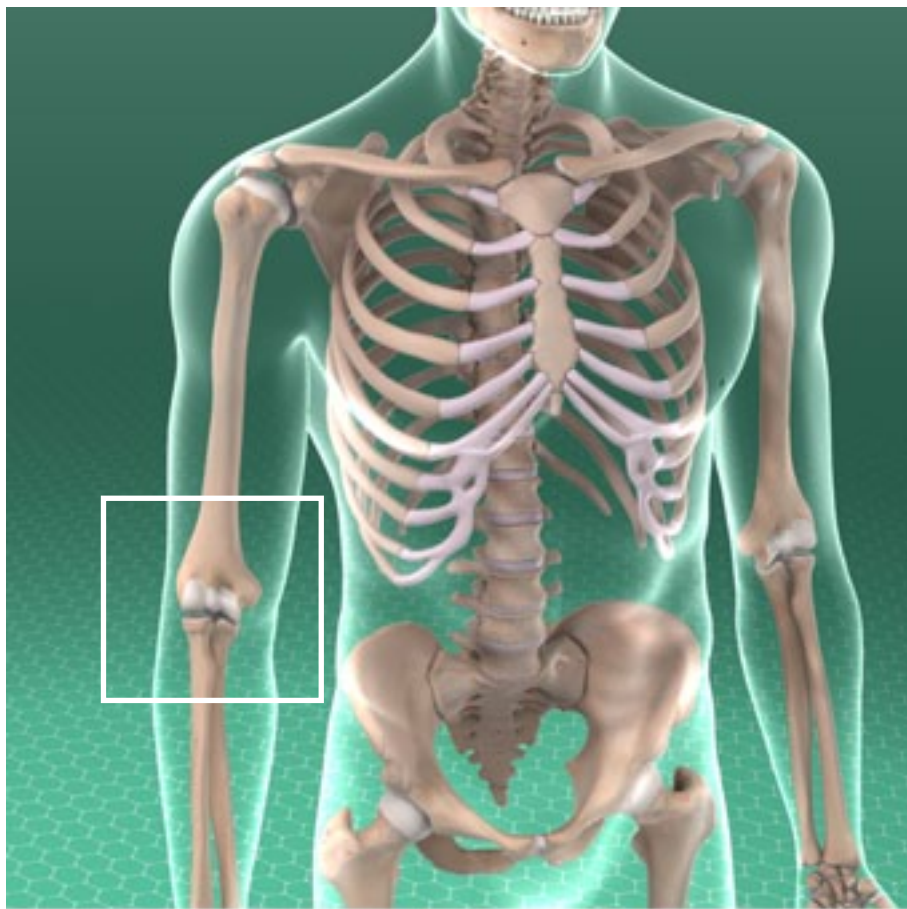


Osteochondritis Dissecans of the Elbow



Overview

This is a disorder that most often affects young athletes. It happens when part of a bone in the elbow loses its blood supply. It weakens, and so does the cartilage that covers it. Bone and cartilage may break off and drift around in the elbow. That can cause the joint to catch and lock up.

Causes

What causes bone to lose its blood supply? The exact cause isn't fully understood. It can happen if you repeatedly stress your elbow. Sports that involve throwing motions, such as baseball and tennis, can increase your risk. This disorder may also be linked to genetic factors.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include pain, stiffness and a popping sensation in the elbow. The joint may be swollen and tender. It may be hard to fully straighten your arm. Your elbow may feel like it catches or locks, and it may not feel stable.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on your needs. If the weakened piece is still in place, it may heal on its own with proper rest. You may benefit from an elbow brace, medications and physical therapy. If these options aren't helpful, or if the piece has broken away and moved around in the joint, it can be repaired with surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

