

# EARLY DIAGNOSIS KEY TO SLOW DOWN PROGRESS OF AVASCULAR NECROSIS, SAY EXPERTS

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Work from home and lack of exercise due to closure of parks and gyms during the pandemic have deprived people of exposure to sunlight, which has resulted in an alarming rise in osteoporotic fractures, says doctor. File | Photo Credit: K.R. Deepak

Orthopaedics, who used to see one to three cases of avascular necrosis (AVN) a year, are now coming across one or two cases of AVN every day. This speaks volumes of the steep rise in AVN, which has no cure but, if diagnosed early, its progression could be slowed down.

“A study shows that the increase in cases of AVN and osteoporosis is due to the use of steroids to treat COVID-19. Irrespective of the percentage of steroid dosage used to treat COVID-19, these cases witnessed an increase. Unfortunately, these cases, which used to be seen after 60 years of age, are now seen in persons in their 20s and 30s,” says K. Rambabu, Director of the Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS).

“I have come across two young men from a private diagnostic centre, a young man from a pharmacy store and two engineering students, who had to undergo hip transplantation. Hip transplants are normally done to treat patients, who encounter such issues in their late 60s. The hip transplants have to be replaced after five or 10 years and when young persons in their 20s or 30s undergo transplantation, the second and subsequent surgeries will be very complicated,” he says.

“COVID-19 recovered patients, experiencing thigh pain, back pain and pain in the groin have to undergo an X-Ray or MRI scan for early detection of these conditions. Osteolysis has now turned out to be the biggest problem. In this condition, the bones lose minerals and there are prone to breaking. Avascular necrosis is death of bone tissue due to lack of blood supply,” says Dr. Rambabu.

“Osteoporosis is another major health concern in the younger population due to lifestyle changes and consumption of junk food. Work from home and lack of exercise due to closure of parks and gyms during the pandemic have deprived people of exposure to sunlight, which has resulted in an alarming rise in osteoporotic fractures,” says P. Siddarth, Consultant Trauma Surgeon and Limb Reconstructive Surgeon, KIMS ICON Hospital.

He suggests eating a healthy diet, which includes calcium and proteins, the two key ingredients for bone health. Calcium and Vitamin D supplements should be considered when the daily consumption of food is low and they have comorbidities like diabetes and hypertension.

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