

## Osteochondritis Dessicans (OCD)

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### Definition:

OCD is a separation of areas of cartilage (a structure similar to the white smooth end of a chicken bone) in the joints, usually at the elbow and knee joints. It is often the result of a blow or twist, and is typically described as water on the knee and/or chronic pain during activity. OCD is diagnosed using x-rays and MRI. Treatment is based on the age of the patient and the severity of the problem.

### Exam:

When the doctor examines your child, he may find tenderness over the area, swelling of the joint, or atrophy (shrinkage) of the surrounding muscle. Often however, the examination will not disclose an exact diagnosis.

### Tests:

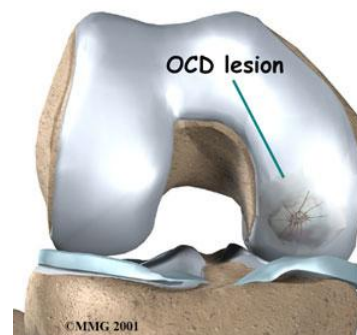
X-rays are the first step in diagnosing your child's problem. If the x-rays are positive for an OCD lesion, the abnormal area looks like a "bruise on an apple." If the x-rays are negative and your doctor feels that the history and physical exam are consistent with OCD, he may order an MRI, which will allow him to look inside the knee without surgery.

### Treatment:

Healing of the lesion is the goal of treatment by your doctor. Surgery is based on MRI findings. If your lesion is:

- 1) **SMALL:** If your child has a lesion that is small your doctor may recommend non-operative treatment consisting of protection with crutches and/or an immobilizer and restriction of athletic activity for a period of time.
- 2) **LARGE:** If your child has a lesion that is large or if there is a "loose body" (a fragment of cartilage inside the joint space) surgery will be considered.

Often the exact surgical treatment is not known until your doctor is looking inside the joint during surgery with an arthroscope (a tiny camera with instruments inserted inside the joint through a small hole in the skin).



**Dr. Locke's clinical care team**