

AVASCULAR NECROSIS OF THE HIP



1. What is it?

Avascular necrosis (AVN) of the hip, also known as osteonecrosis of the hip, is a condition where there is a loss of blood supply to the head of the femur, leading to bone death and collapse of the joint

2. Clinical symptoms

- Insidious onset hip pain
- Pain mostly in the groin, but may refer to buttock and thigh
- Reduced hip ROM and pain particularly with forced hip IR
- **Consider the risk factors!**



3. Additional characteristics

- Symptoms generally worse with weightbearing/movement
- AVN is rare, and so can be easily missed



4. Risk factors

- Long term corticosteroids
- Alcoholism
- Trauma
- Lupus
- Sickle cell
- Excessive weight
- Exposure to radiation/chemo
- Smoking

5. Management

- Simple radiograph may be the first option, but AVN can be missed on x-ray
- If a high index of suspicion from clinical features and risk factors, refer onwards for MRI
- Early diagnosis and referral is essential to prevent bone destruction

