STRESS FRACTURE

A stress fracture is an overuse injury that occurs when the bone is overloaded and a small crack develops. Stress fractures are often the result of increasing the amount or intensity of an activity too rapidly. They also be caused by impact on an unfamiliar or hard surface; improper footwear; and increased or sustained physical activity. Since the knee is a weight bearing joint, either the tibia or femur, are susceptible to a stress fracture.

Pain with activity is the most common complaint. When suspicious for a stress fractures, an X-ray should be taken. Sometimes the stress fracture will not be seen on routine X-rays, so a CT scan or MRI may be needed to confirm the diagnosis.

When diagnosed the most important treatment is rest and activity modification. It may take 6-8 weeks for the stress fracture to heal.

Here are some to help prevent stress fractures:

- When participating in any new sports activity, set incremental milestones and gradually build up to your desired goal
- Cross-training. Instead of running every day to meet cardiovascular goals, run on even days and bike on odd days. Add some strength training and flexibility exercises to the mix for the most benefit.
- Maintain a healthy diet incorporating calcium- and Vitamin D-rich foods in your meals.
- Use the proper equipment. Do not wear old or worn running shoes.
- If pain or swelling occurs, immediately stop the activity and rest for a few days. If pain persists, you should seek medical attention.