



Injury Law Center[®]

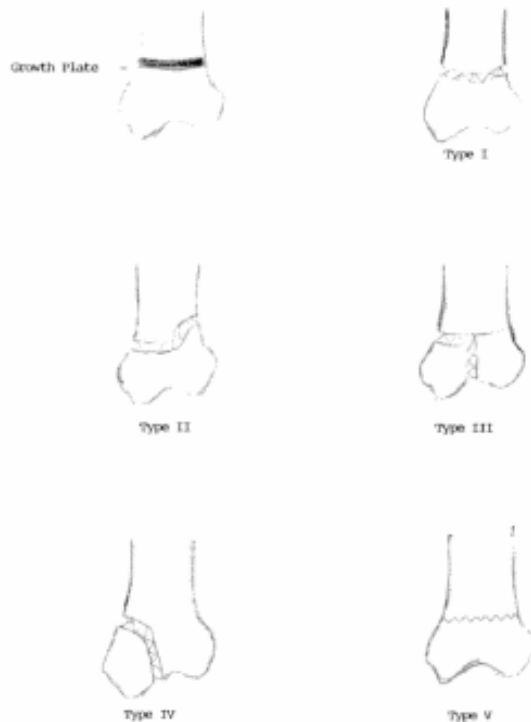
Note: This information is provided to give you a basic understanding of the injury. It is not intended as medical advice. You should consult a qualified medical provider.

Fractures

Description

A fracture is usually the result of a traumatic injury to the bone causing the bone tissue or bony cartilage to be displaced or broken. Fractures are classified such as compound, incomplete and complete. Compound fractures break the skin exposing the bone often causing additional soft tissue injury and infection. A complete fracture is a fracture where there is a fracture completely through the bone. If the fracture is partially across the bone shaft this is called an incomplete fracture. This is often the result of a crushing force applied to the bone.

A comminuted fracture is a fracture wherein the fragments of the bone break off. An avulsion fracture is where a fragment of bone which is attached to the end pulls away from the bone beneath it.



Causes and Symptoms

Fractures often result from trauma to the bone. However, there are specific diseases that increase the risk for fractures including rickets, osteoporosis, bone cancer and tumors and prolonged disuse of a body part such as after a cerebral vascular accident (stroke).

Symptoms of fractures usually begin with pain and swelling. In more severe cases, there may be a loss of a pulse below the fracture site, as in the arms or legs, which is often accompanied by numbness, tingling or paralysis below the fracture site.

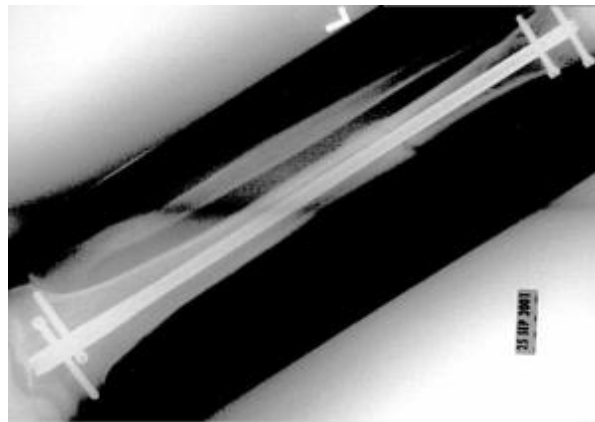
Diagnoses of a fracture is very often obvious. An x-ray is the most common test used to determine a bone fracture. Usually, x-rays will be performed in a series giving the doctor several views of the area to confirm the presence of a fracture. Sometimes, a CT scan or MRI are required to show the fracture. In children, an initial x-ray may not show a fracture, but if repeated seven to fourteen days later, the fracture may appear.

It should be noted that in children, the bones grow at the end of the shaft, called the growth plate. There are five types of fractures that can occur through the growth plate. If a child suffers one of these fractures, then the child is at risk for having that limb, be it a leg or an arm, shorter than the other one, or that limb growing crooked.

Medical Help

The treatment of a fracture obviously depends on the type of fracture. Initially the fracture site is immobilized.

Mobilization is carried out by external fixation such as splints, cast or braces.



Where the fractured bones are close together, the fracture is "reduced" that is the bones are realigned. A closed reduction refers to realigning the bones without breaking the skin. This is performed with manual manipulation and traction and usually done under anesthesia. Often times, if the fracture is comminuted K wires will be inserted through the skin to hold the bone fragments together. This is still considered a closed reduction. Open reduction refers to surgery that is performed wherein an incision in the skin is actually made and the bones are exposed and

realigned, often being held together with nails, screws and rods. Sometimes, the surgeon will leave these devices in the body, other times they will need to be removed.

Practical Advice

If you suffer a fracture to a joint, then physical therapy will invariably be ordered for you. Physical therapy for a fracture joint is often times very time consuming and very painful. However, if you hope to regain as much range of motion is possible, then you must faithfully attend all of your physical therapy and perform all of your home exercises.

Key Terms

Avulsion fracture-A fracture caused by a fragment of bone being torn away from the underlying bone where a strong ligament or tendon is attached to it.

Comminuted fracture-A fracture where there are several fragments of bones.

Reduction-The realignment of the bones either externally or through internal fixation, requiring surgery.

Range of Motion (ROM)- range of motion is the degree of movement, flexion, extension, etc. that a joint can move.

HELP

If you have suffered a fracture, or any other type of injury, you should seek appropriate medical help and if your injury was caused by another's negligence or fault, you should seek appropriate legal help bring a claim for compensation.

Feel free to call or e-mail The Injury Law Center® for answers to your questions and help with your legal claim.

Text by Attorney Ed Wallace

Medical illustration by Michael Canavan

Injury Law Center®
info@attywallace.com
1-855-PI-ATTYS (1-855-742-8897)

Massachusetts
270 Littleton Rd. Unit 22
Westford, MA 01886
Phone: 978-589-9995

New Hampshire
39 Simon St. Unit 9
Nashua, NH 03060
Phone: 603-883-4100