

FRACTURES

A fracture occurs when a bone breaks. If the broken bone sticks through the skin it is called an open or compound fracture. Fractures are also called broken bones



SOME FACTS ABOUT FRACTURES

- Whenever a bone is broken, the tissue around it will be swollen and very sore.
- There are different kinds of fractures.
- Three of the most common are:
 - Simple:** single fracture
 - Comminuted:** bone is broken into two or more pieces (fragmented)
 - Compound:** broken bone sticks out of the skin

TYPES OF FRACTURES



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- A limb or joint that **looks out of place** or is in an unusual position
- Very **intense pain** in the injured area
- Cracking** or popping sound followed by intense pain
- Crying** and holding or pointing to an injured area
- Swelling** and **bruising**
- A feeling of **numbness** or tingling
- Broken skin** and bleeding with bone sticking out
- Unable to move** the limb that is injured
- Will not use** the injured area (avoidance)
- Limping** or pain when walking or running



PREVENTION

Provide careful supervision and attention to:

- Falling.** Assist individuals who have poor balance or problems walking to prevent falls.
- Wheelchairs.** Getting in and out of a wheelchair or transporting a person in a wheelchair in a van can result in banging, bumping or jamming fingers, hands, legs or feet. *This can lead to fractures.* **BE CAREFUL!**
- Sensory Disability.** Sensory disability such as blindness can result in frequent bumping into objects or tripping and falling. This can also lead to fractures and other injuries.
- Other Factors.** Individuals who engage in **Self Injury**, are **Assaultive**, or are **Impulsive** (such as hyperactivity disorder) are more likely to injure themselves and have broken bones. When **restraint** is not used properly or the person puts up too much resistance fractures/injuries can occur.
- Diet and Exercise.** Maintain a healthy diet high in calcium and encourage walking/physical activities (helps reduce risk of osteoporosis).
- Medications:** Make sure the person takes their prescribed vitamins, supplements, and medications.



CAUSES

- Broken bones are often caused by **falling, car accidents** or **sports activities**
- They can also be the result of being **hit** by a person or object, **bumping** into an object or **jamming** of a body part.
- People who have **osteoporosis** have a high risk of bone fractures, even from simple activities like dressing or bathing. This risk is greatest in people who are over 65-yrs of age, can't walk, use a wheelchair or take steroid or anti-seizure medicines over a long period of time.



WHAT TO DO

- **Evaluate.** Check to see how badly the person is injured. Make sure they can breathe.
- **Keep Comfortable.** Talk in a gentle voice and try to keep them still. Do not move the person.
- **Keep Wound Clean.** If the skin is broken rinse it with clean water (if possible) and cover it with a clean dressing.
- **Ice.** Very gently place an ice pack on the injured area. Remove after 15 minutes



CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Call the doctor or nurse if you suspect the person has a broken bone in the hand or fingers and they can be safely driven to the doctor.

All other fractures should be considered an EMERGENCY. Call 911 so that an ambulance can transport the person to the hospital.



WHAT NOT TO DO

- **DO NOT rub** or massage the injured area
- **DO NOT try to move the injured area** or straighten it out.
- **DO NOT move the person** if the injury is in the neck, spine or back.
- **DO NOT** give the person anything to **eat or drink.**



EMERGENCY

Call 911 immediately if you suspect or see:

- A broken bone in the **head, neck, or back** (*do not move the person*).
- A fracture of the **hip, pelvis, leg or arm.**
- The **bone is sticking out** of the skin or there is **severe bleeding.**
- The area below the injury looks **pale** or **blue** or feels **cold** or **clammy.**



DOCUMENT

File an **Incident Report** (if required) and complete other documentation such as writing down a description in the logbook if the person requires emergency medical care.



TO LEARN MORE - Go to these websites:

- <http://www.health.allrefer.com/health/fractures>
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000001>
- <http://www.webMD.com>