



HEALTH IDENTIFIERS & SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

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

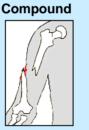
- Whenever a bone is broken, the tissue around it will be swollen and very sore.
- There are different kinds of fractures.
- Three of the most common are:
 Simple: single fracture
 Comminuted: bone is broken into two or more pieces (fragmented)
 Compound: broken bone sticks out of the skin

TYPES OF FRACTURES

Simple









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.

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

CAUTION 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.

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FRACTURES



- **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



- 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.



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.



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.



EMERGENCY

Call 911 immediately if you suspect or see:

- A broken bone in the **head**, **neck**, or **back** (<u>do not</u> 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.



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

The Health Identifiers and Symptoms of Illness Series has been developed by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to serve as a resource for consumers, families and personal support professionals. The information contained in this series is not a substitute for personal professional examination and treatment provided by a health care professional. Always follow the instructions and advice of your doctor or other health professional.