

Open Fractures - What You Should Know



Open fractures are severe orthopedic conditions that are characterized by severe bleeding and fractured bone protruding out of the skin. These situations are medical emergencies and require immediate medical assessment. In this post, we will have a detailed look at what open fractures are along with their management and treatment.

Surgery is always required for the treatment of open fractures, and it involves the use of [trauma implants](#).

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Open Fractures – An Overview

An open fracture is a condition characterized by open wounds, extensive bleeding, and direct contact between the fractured bone and the external environment. These fractures require immediate assessment by a team of orthopedic specialists. As the risk of infections is high in open fractures, the healthcare service provider will first look for minimizing their chances.

There are two common presentations for open fractures:

“In-to-out” fractures

“Out-to-in” fractures

In-to-out fractures occur when the fractured bone pierces out of the skin causing a wound. Such injuries occur because of high-energy traumatic events like automobile accidents, falling from a good height, and a direct impact from a solid & heavy object.

If we talk about out-to-in fractures, then they generally occur because of ballistic injuries like gunshots. These fractures occur when something pierces the skin from the outside and a gunshot is a perfect example of that. These injuries can also occur when something sharp enters the skin and result in a fracture.

What Are the Major Risks Associated with Open Fractures?

Open fractures pose a serious risk of bacterial infections because of the direct contact of internal body structure with the external environment. The contamination can sometimes be severe enough that amputation is required.

The infection occurs because of contamination from dirt, mud, and other substances present at the injury site.

Open fractures are also characterized by injuries to the nerves, blood vessels, and surrounding tissues. Hence, in some cases, severe nerve injuries are experienced and that results in numbness. Skin damage is always evident in the case of open fractures.

To Minimize the chances of infection, the orthopedic specialist will inject antibiotics.

What is the Diagnosis for Open Fractures?

Well, the orthopedic specialist can tell open fractures just by looking at the injury. However, certain tests are required to assess the severity of the condition. Everything in the case of open fractures is done in an OT room. Multiple x-rays along with other imaging tests are performed to see injuries in surrounding areas. The orthopedic specialist will also apply a dressing on the wound to reduce the risk of infection.

What is the Treatment for Open Fractures?

All open fractures require surgical treatment and the type of surgery required depends on the severity of the condition. In most cases, internal fixation using trauma plates, screws, and other implants is done. However, some cases are severe enough to require external fixation.

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