

Bone Fractures

Introduction:

Bone fractures are a common condition. A bone can be completely fractured, or partially fractured in any number of ways (crosswise, lengthwise, or in multiple places).

The most common causes of fractures are:

- Trauma: such as falls, motor vehicle accidents, and sports injuries.
- Osteoporosis: This disorder weakens the bones and makes them more likely to break.
- Repetitive motion and overuse: Repetitive motion can tire muscles and place more force on the bones. This can result in stress fractures. Stress fractures are more common in athletes.

Risk factors:

- Gender: Women are far more likely to have a fracture than men, in fact one in two women over the age of 50 will have a fracture in her lifetime. This is because women's bones even at their best condition (age 25–30) are generally smaller and less dense than men's bones.
- Age: Women lose more bone density than men as they age because of the loss of estrogen at menopause.
- Smoking: Smoking is a risk factor for bone fractures because of its impact on hormone levels. Women who smoke generally go through menopause at an earlier age.
- Cortisone: Cortisone is often prescribed to treat chronic inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Unfortunately, the need to use Cortisone at increased doses can frequently cause bone loss and fractures.
- Rheumatoid arthritis: Rheumatoid Arthritis is a debilitating autoimmune disease— in which the body attacks healthy cells and tissues around the joints, resulting in severe joint and bone loss.
- Diabetes patients: Patients with type 1 diabetes often have low bone density. The vision problems and nerve damage that frequently accompany diabetes can sometimes contribute to falls and related fractures.
- Previous fractures.
- Family history of hip fracture increases the risk of hip fractures in children.

Symptoms:

Many fractures are very painful and may prevent the person suffering from them from moving the injured area. Other common symptoms include:

- Swelling and tenderness around the injured area.
- Bruising.
- Deformity: A limb may look out of place or a part of the bone may puncture through the skin.

Prevention:

- Sticking to a proper diet rich in calcium and Vitamin D.
- Exercising helps in preventing some fractures.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **How long does it take for a broken bone to heal?**
Broken bones take about four to eight weeks to heal, depending on the patient's age, health, and how much rest they get.

Clinical Health Education Department

For more information, please contact us by email on:

Hpromotion@moh.gov.sa