



Snap and Crack

Part 1: Warning Sign of Fracture & Fracture Management



Did you know?

Up to 5 of 10 with SCI have a fracture in their lifetime



If you think you may have a fracture, don't delay!

Fractures of the thigh or shin bones typically happen just above or just below the knee joint in people with spinal cord injury (SCI). The key to optimal fracture management is early detection.

1. What are the main causes of fractures?

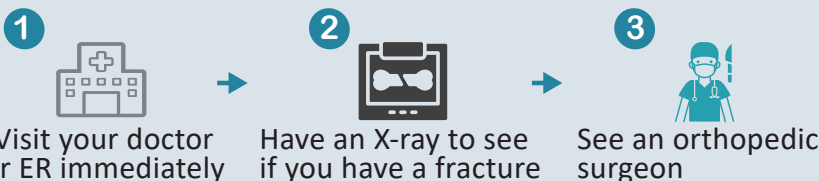
- Simple daily activities such as car or toilet transfers
- Falls from sitting or standing height

2. What are the warning signs of a fracture?

- Swelling
- Bruising, redness
- Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) or pain
- A deformity or bump

3. What should I do, if I think I have a fracture?

Important first 3 steps



4. What are the different ways of managing leg fractures?

Your orthopedic surgeon can discuss the best fracture management for you (surgery vs. casting) based on your preferences, health status, fracture location & the availability of attendant care or family supports.

Surgery

- Shorter fracture healing time
- You may also need antibiotic therapy
- Blood clot (VTE) prevention is needed

Casting

- Longer fracture healing time (3-6 months)
- Need a soft custom molded cast, frequent skin checks and help with transfers
- Blood clot (VTE) prevention is needed

5. What complications can arise following a fracture?

Early Complications



Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD: Sudden, major increase in blood pressure)

- **Common causes of AD after a fracture**
Cast too tight, pressure injury, pain, new fracture, overfull bladder or bowel
- **How to prevent AD**
You may need drug therapy to prevent fracture related pain.



Venous Thromboembolism (VTE: Blood clot)

- **How to prevent VTE**
A specialist will suggest you take blood thinners after your fracture for 2-4 weeks or until you return to your normal mobility. Blood thinners can be unsafe for some people.

Other Fracture Complications

- Pressure injury
- Respiratory infection
- Urinary tract infection
- Shoulder pain
- Depression

To Do List

Fracture Management

- If you have warning signs of a fracture, get an X-ray in your doctor's office or the ER.
- Discuss with your orthopedic surgeon the best fracture management for you.
- Monitor yourself for health complications following a fracture.
- AD and VTE can cause serious illness.

Learn about AD and VTE: <https://pva.org/research-resources/publications/consumer-guides>



Know The Warning Signs Of Fracture And Seek Urgent Care From An Orthopedic Surgeon.

Learn More

SCI Fragments:
www.scifragments.ca



The information contained in these handouts & podcast are not intended to replace medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their individual circumstances with their doctor & rehab care team.

Funding



This project is supported in part by the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) Education Foundation (Grant 867), UHN Foundation, KITE Research Institute & CravenLab.

