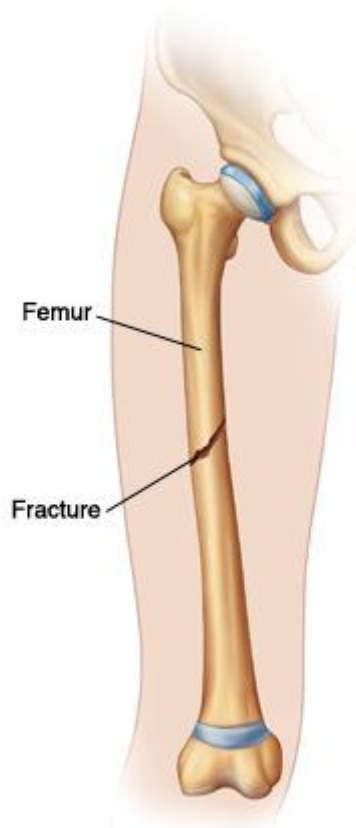


What Are Distal Femur Fractures?



A distal femur fracture is when there is a break in the thigh bone that goes from the condyles to the metaphyseal region. These fractures often occur because of high-energy events and can be experienced by people of all age groups. The treatment of these fractures does require surgery and that may involve the use of intramedullary nails.

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In this post, we will have a detailed look at what distal femur fractures are along with their diagnosis and treatment.

What Are the Causes of Distal Femur Fractures?

Young adults, especially those in their 30s experience distal femur fractures because of high-energy trauma such as automobile accidents and falling from a height. Intra-articular distal femur fractures commonly occur because of such events.

Low-energy accidents like slipping in the bathroom, falling at home, or twisting cause distal femur fractures in elderlies. Women over 65 and those suffering from osteoporosis are at high risk of low-energy distal femur fractures.

How Distal Femur Fractures Are Classified?

Based on the AO classification system, distal femur fractures can be classified into 3 types:

Type A – These are the extra-articular fractures.

Type B – These are partial articular fractures where one part of the articular surface is involved whereas the rest joint is attached to the metaphysis and diaphysis.

Type C – These fractures cross the joint surface and are separate from the diaphysis. Type C fractures are also known as complete articular fractures.

What Are the Symptoms of Distal Femur fractures?

Fractures are painful and similar is the case with distal femur fractures. Other signs and symptoms associated with such fractures include:

Pain while putting weight on the injured leg

Deformity in the leg

Swelling and bruising

Tenderness to touch

How Distal Femur Fractures Are Diagnosed?

Both physical examination and imaging tests are important for the correct diagnosis of distal femur fractures.

During the physical examination, the orthopedic specialist will examine the deformity in the leg along with other visible symptoms like swelling, bruising, and tenderness. Besides this, the healthcare service provider may also ask the patient to stand or walk a bit. Now, to confirm the severity and the fracture pattern, imaging tests will be ordered. The tests required may include:

AP and lateral view of the femur with X-ray examination

CT scan if an intra-articular fracture is suspected

How Distal Femur Fractures Are Treated?

The treatment of distal femur fractures depends on the severity and the fracture pattern. Although, surgical intervention is required in most cases. Non-surgical treatment is only recommended for stable non-displaced fractures.

The treatment based on the type of fracture includes:

Extra-articular or simple articular distal femur fracture – Intramedullary nailing and screw fixation

Simple unicondylar or epicondyle distal femur fracture – Simple screw fixation

Severely comminuted or non-reconstructable fractures – Arthroplasty

Besides all this, distal femur fractures occurring in people with pre-existing osteoarthritis are treated with arthroplasty.

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