

Here's What Happens When a Fracture Goes Untreated?



A fracture may be a common orthopedic injury that almost every second individual experiences once in a lifetime but, it could be a serious one if unnoticed. This is not only true for severe fractures but also for mild ones. In this post, we will see some complications that may arise if timely treatment of a fracture is not provided.

Now, if we talk about the reasons why a fracture may go untreated, then there may be 2 broader reasons ignorance and no significant symptoms. Sometimes, the complications can be more severe than you would have thought. Let us have a look at it in detail.

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Complications that May Occur if a Fracture is Untreated

Non-Union or Delayed Union

The body has its own mechanism for healing a fracture. If you experience a fracture and ignore getting it treated, the body will treat it. But the difference will be improper healing. Sometimes, the healing time will be significantly higher than it takes after treatment. While on the other hand, in some cases, the fracture will remain as it is. This will result in persistent pain, swelling, and tenderness.

Bone Infection

Besides non-union or delayed union, there are other severe complications as well that may occur if a fracture is not treated. One of those complications is a bone infection. If such a problem occurs, the infection may also spread to other areas of the body.

Long-Term Nerve Damage

This is another issue that must be considered in mind if you ignore the treatment of a fracture. Our body has three types of nerves, autonomic, motor, and sensory. Now, any of the types of nerves can get damaged while affecting the function they control. The effects could be life-long.

Malunion

As a result of the body's natural healing process, a fracture may heal on its own if you do not seek treatment. However, there are chances of improper healing. And when such a problem occurs, deformity around the fracture site

can be noticed. Malunions further need surgical treatment where the bone will be broken again and set for proper healing.

Damage to Muscles and Ligaments

Muscles and/or ligaments may experience stress in the case of malunions. While on the other hand, the damage may occur over time. This results in weakness, pain, and numbness in that area. Sometimes, the complication is so severe that surgery may be required to repair the damaged ligament or muscle.

How to Indicate a Fracture?

Well, the above-mentioned complications are severe, and they may stay lifelong in some cases. The best way to prevent these complications is to identify the fracture early. However, it is hard to identify slow-occurring fractures but still, there are a few indicators that you must watch, especially when you engage in high-impact activities or are an athlete. The signs may include swelling, bruising, discoloration around the affected site, inability to put weight on the injured joint/bone, and grinding sensations.

Noticing these signs and consulting a specialist may help you diagnose the fracture early and minimize the risk of the above-mentioned complications.

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