Femoral Shaft Fracture - An Expert Guide

The femur is a strong thigh bone that forms the hip joint through its ball-shaped head. Fractures in this bone require a strong force because of its strength.

Femur shaft fracture is when the thighbone breaks in the middle and the pattern of the break will define its type. These types of fractures are severe; hence, surgery is required in most cases for treatment. In this post, we will discuss femur shaft fractures in detail with their diagnosis and treatment.

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What Are the Causes of Femur Shaft Fractures?

As the femur is the strongest bone in our body, femoral shaft fractures often occur because of high-intensity trauma like motor vehicle accidents, an impact with a solid object, or high-energy collisions.

In the elderly, low-impact injuries may result in femur fractures because of low bone density and conditions like osteoporosis. Though these fractures are rare in children, bone-weakening conditions like osteopenia and osteoporosis may be the cause.

How Femoral Shaft Fractures Are Classified?

Fractures in the femoral shaft vary greatly and based on the pattern of break & severity, they are classified based on Winquist and Hansen classification system.

Type 0 – It defines that there is a single break in the femoral shaft and no comminution is there.

Type I – Type I femoral shaft fractures are those where an insignificant amount of comminution is there.

Type II – When the cortical contact is more than 50%, the fracture is classified as type II.

Type III – Type III femur shaft fractures are those having less than 50% of cortical contact.

Type IV – There is no contact between the proximal and distal fragments in type IV femur shaft fractures. They are known as segmental fractures.

What Are the Symptoms of Femur Shaft Fractures?

Immediate and intense pain is experienced in the case of femur shaft fractures. The patient becomes unable to put weight on the injured leg. Besides this, the injured leg appears shorter than the uninjured one along with the deformity.

In the case of open fractures, the bone may break open the skin and come out. Such cases require emergency assessment by the doctor.

How Femur Shaft Fractures Are Diagnosed?

The diagnosis of these types of fractures starts with a physical examination where the healthcare service provider will look for deformity, numbness in the leg, bruises, and swelling. Imaging tests will later confirm the severity and the type of fracture in the femoral shaft. The tests ordered may include:

- X-rays
- CT Scan

How Fractures in the Femoral Shaft Are Treated?

Surgery is always required in the case of femoral shaft fractures. When a severe open fracture is there, external fixation may be recommended to bring broken bone fragments back to their original position and allow them to heal.

In the case of distal femoral fracture, intramedullary nailing will be done. While on the other hand, when it is not feasible, the surgeon will try fixing the fracture using metal plates and screws.

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Contact Information

Siora Surgicals Pvt. Ltd.

Address: WZ- 1, 2nd Floor, Phool Bagh, RamPura New Delhi, India
Mobile: +(91)-9810021264
Email: online@siora.net

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