

Treatment for Hip Fracture: A decision guide

What is a hip fracture?

A hip fracture is a break in the top of the **femur** or thighbone — the large bone between the hip and knee.

Hip fractures can be:

- **Nondisplaced** (the bone is broken but still remains in place)
- **Displaced** (the bone has moved out of place)

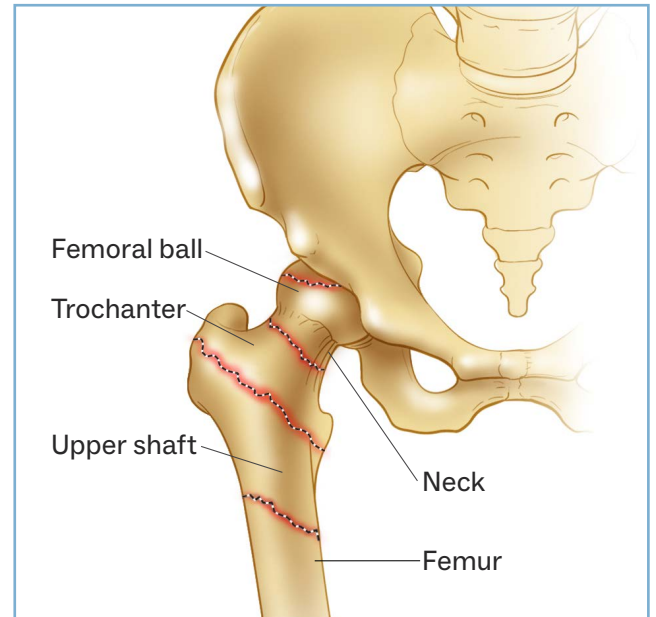
Hip fractures are usually caused by a fall or a blow to the hip. They are most common in older people (those over age 65), especially those with **osteoporosis** [os-tee-oh-puh-roh-sis] (bone loss). Hip fractures are rare in younger people and are usually caused by high-impact trauma.

A hip fracture is a serious injury. It can be very painful and make everyday tasks like dressing, bathing, and walking difficult until it heals. Pain from a hip fracture can cause delirium, depression, and sleeplessness. A hip fracture can also put you at risk for other health problems, including blood clots or pneumonia.

How is hip fracture treated?

The goal of treatment is to reduce pain and discomfort and — if possible — help you or your family member get back to daily life. Treatment depends on the type of fracture and the patient's overall health.

- **Surgery** is usually done soon after a hip fracture is diagnosed. Having surgery can help shorten a stay in the hospital and may decrease pain and complications. In some cases, surgery may be delayed for 1 to 2 days so the doctor can treat other medical problems and reduce the risk of complications.



The most common locations for a hip fracture are the **ball** or **neck** of the femur, the **trochanter**, or the **upper shaft** (subtrochanter).

Surgery may not be recommended if you:

- Are not able to walk on your own
- Have many health problems that may get worse because of surgery
- Are not likely to benefit from having surgery
- **Palliative** [PAL-ee-uh-tiv] care is medical care that is focused on improving the quality of life for patients and their families. It may be done with or without surgical or medical treatment. To learn more, ask your healthcare provider for a copy of Intermountain's **Palliative Care Services** fact sheet or to speak with a member of the Palliative Care team.
- **Hospice** is a specialized program for people living with a life-limiting illness. It is provided by a team of professionals with expertise in end-of-life care. To learn more, ask your healthcare provider for a copy of Intermountain's **Homecare and Hospice Services** booklet or speak with a hospice professional..

How do I decide?

Before you decide on treatment, you and your family should talk with the surgeon or care manager about the risks, and possible complications. Discuss and answer these questions together:

I'm concerned about:

- ☐ My medical conditions and whether they might get worse if I have surgery.
- ☐ Anesthesia and how it may affect my ability to think.
- ☐ The cost of surgery and my care after surgery.

It is important that I:

- ☐ Can continue to live at home.
- ☐ Am able to continue all of my favorite activities.
- ☐ Can continue to manage my basic needs by myself (fix meals, bathe, dress, get in and out of bed) when I go home.
- ☐ Extend my life.
- ☐ Don't have pain.

It would be okay to:

- ☐ Have some help managing my needs when I go home.
- ☐ Go to a care facility for a period of time while I heal.
- ☐ Move to a care facility permanently.

Questions for my doctor

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