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What is a femur fracture?

The femur is one of the strongest bones in the body.

The femur is the thigh bone--it extends from the hip joint down to the knee joint.

Because the femur is such a strong bone, it can take tremendous force to cause a femur fracture. Usually they are secondary to vehicular accident

What causes a femur fracture?

- Falls from a height
- Car accidents

Femur fractures are generally separated into three broad categories:

Proximal Femur Fractures

Involve the upper-most portion of the thigh bone, just adjacent to the hip joint.

Common treatment: surgical with a rod in the bone



Femoral Shaft Fractures

The treatment of a femoral shaft fracture is almost always with surgery.

The most common procedure is to insert a metal rod down the center of the thigh bone called an intramedullary rod.



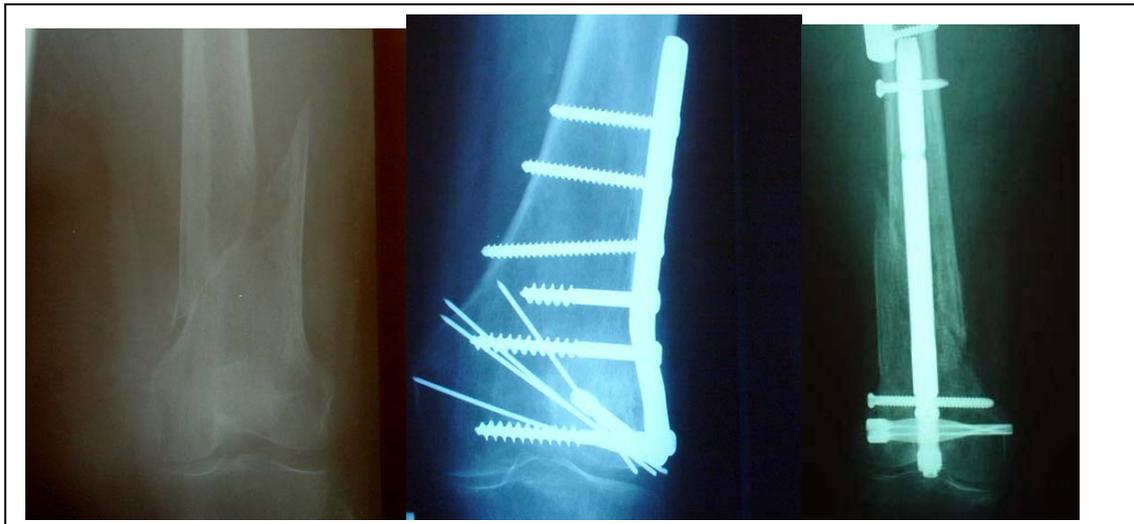
This procedure reconnects the two ends of the bone, and the rod is secured in place with screws both above and below the fracture.

The intramedullary rod generally remains in the bone for the life of the patient, but can be removed if it causes pain or other problems.

Other less commonly used treatments of a femur fracture include a plate and screws or an external fixator. These treatment options may have to be used if an intramedullary rod cannot be used for some reason.

Supracondylar Femur Fractures

A supracondylar femur fracture is an unusual injury to the femur just above the knee joint. These fractures often involve the cartilage surface of the knee joint, and must be treated with this cartilage injury in mind



therefore more prone to fracture. However, patients may also sustain a supracondylar femur fracture after high-energy injuries as described above.

What can go wrong?

1. Anaesthetic complication
2. Infection 1%
3. Non-union: Union rate is 96%. 4% may need bone grafting and refixation
4. Malunion: heals in abnormal position
5. Breakage of the rod: requires refixation. This is rarer with newer implants
6. Shortening: in case of bad fracture
7. Knee stiffness requiring prolonged rehabilitation

Generally, these are major surgeries and may take 6-9 months of rehabilitation.