



FRACTURE LIAISON SERVICE

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Fragility fractures

You have been given this factsheet because you have had, or are at risk of a type of broken bone known as a 'fragility fracture' and have been placed under the care of the fracture fragility service. We hope this factsheet will answer some of the questions you may have. If you would like more information please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

Our dedicated team of experts includes:

- Orthopaedic Surgeons
- Geriatricians
- Radiologists
- Subspecialty Consultants
- Emergency Physicians
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Clinical Pharmacists
- Dietitians
- Home Healthcare Team
- FLS Nurses / Coordinators

01

What is a fragility fracture?

A fragility fracture is a broken bone caused by a fall from a standing height or less. Fragility fractures often affect the larger bones of the body such as the back, hip or wrist. Bones are strong and usually don't break from a simple fall, but as we get older our bones become weaker. Osteoporosis and other bone conditions can increase this effect of age, and further weaken bones. This means that even a low-impact fall from a standing height can cause a broken bone.

02

What happens next?

Your attending doctor will determine on the management plan for your fragility fracture. Whether surgery is needed will depend on a number of situations, including your age and medical history. You may need to attend a bone health check to assess your risk of developing osteoporosis – a condition which leads to thinning of the bones. We will use an assessment tool to calculate your risk of another fracture. You will be asked to give details of your age, height and weight, gender, whether you have certain related conditions or are taking steroids. We may also ask about your use of cigarettes and alcohol. If needed, treatment to strengthen your bones may be recommended.

03

Why is a bone health assessment important?

Bone health assessments:

- ✔ Allow you to start treatment earlier to improve your bone health
- ✔ Reduce uncertainty about whether you need treatment to reduce your risk of breaking another bone
- ✔ Provide information which helps ensure you are prescribed the right medication.

The risk of a further fracture is increased in the first two years following a fragility fracture, therefore it is important that bone health assessments are carried out promptly.



Bone density scan

You may need to have a bone density scan (DXA) as part of your assessment. People who suffer a fracture may have generally weaker bones that are more likely to break. DXA scans can be used to measure the strength of bones. A DXA scan usually takes less than 20 minutes, is painless and does not make people feel claustrophobic. You will be asked to lie flat on a couch during the appointment. However, if this is difficult for you, please let us know in advance.

Falls

Anyone over 55 years of age who is treated for a fragility fracture following a fall should have a falls assessment. This will be carried out by the FLS professional care team where appropriate. Falls are the most frequent and serious type of accident in older people. However, falling can be prevented or reduced. A falls assessment will identify whether there are specific things that can be done to help prevent future falls.

04

What can I do to help myself?



Follow a healthy, balanced diet and try to maintain a healthy weight/body mass index (BMI) between 20-25.



Reduce your alcohol intake to no more than 14 units per week.



Stop smoking.



Do regular weight-bearing exercise. If you are unsure how your diagnosis may affect what you can and cannot do, speak to your GP or health professional.



Make sure to attend any follow up appointments with your doctors to monitor your bone health closely.



It is very important to continue to take medications you are prescribed to strengthen your bones.

05

What happens after hospital discharge?

After our doctors and multidisciplinary team are happy with your recovery, they will inform you on the follow up sessions that you need to attend. It is important that you attend the follow up sessions as rehabilitation after a fall is crucial in aiming to regain back your mobility, reduce falls risk, decrease risk of infection, boost your mental health, and improve your overall quality of life.

Our Orthopaedic Centre is located at Level 4, Tower D

Operation Hours:

Monday – Friday: 8:30am-5:30pm

Saturday: 8:30am -12:30pm

Closed on Sundays & Public Holidays

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