

# *Orthopaedic Connection*

## **Foot Fractures**

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*Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

### **The Problem**

Think about this for a minute. You have 26 bones in each foot. Lots of you don't wear shoes whenever you can go without. Many more wear flip-flops like shoes when they go out.

Is there any wonder why so many fractures of the feet happen?

There are a lot of places in those 26 bones (and their joints) where a fracture can occur. Some are very serious fractures, others are less so.

### **Heel Fracture**

A fracture of either of the two bones of the hindfoot (calcaneus in the heel and talus that sits atop it) usually occurs only with severe trauma such as an automobile accident or a fall from a height.

If it happens you know at once something bad has happened.

Symptoms = acute pain, swelling, tenderness and you can't bear weight.

Heel fractures are serious and need immediate attention by an Orthopaedic Surgeon who can decide if surgery is needed to treat the fracture.

### **Metatarsal Fractures**

The long bones in the feet that connect with the toes are the metatarsals.

These fractures result from a direct blow like something heavy dropping on your foot or getting hit during a contact sport.

Pain is always present in the mid foot especially with weight bearing and there is always some swelling.

The degree of injury tells me whether you need a cast, brace or possibly surgery. The time of healing varies tremendously from 6 weeks to 3 or 4 months.

### **Broken Toe**

Why were you walking in bare feet with the lights out? Dang. You broke your toe(s). They swell, hurt and get black and blue.

It is best to have it checked and have an x-ray because the broken bone can be out of position and you don't want it to heal that way. Occasionally I need to do surgery, but mostly broken toes can be taped to the next toe to immobilize it.

### **Tarsal Fracture**

The tarsal bones are several bones more or less in rows proximal (above) the metatarsals. They aren't injured or dislocated nearly as often as other foot bones.

But injury to these bones can be very serious and cause a great deal of pain and disability. They require careful, thorough evaluation which often includes not only plain films, but a CT scan as well. Orthopaedic Surgery treatment is required.

This has been an overview of the injuries I see in the foot. You have to walk around on that foot for the rest of your life so it makes sense to have it evaluated and treated properly.

Actually, I have nothing against flip-flops – *at the beach!* Have a good week. Take care of your feet. You need ‘em.

**Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website.**

12 I sincerely appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Besides what you read today there is a huge treasure trove of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information at [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). It contains the Website Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and complete archive of every GCH article I have written.

I specialize in you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush