

Distal tibia fractures

Distal tibia fractures, or fractures of the lower part of the shinbone near the ankle, can be caused by low-impact injuries such as a light fall, sports injuries, or high-impact injuries such as fall from a height, or a traffic accident. The tibia is protected by a soft tissue cover and is therefore delicate. When a fracture occurs, the surrounding soft tissue and skin tear easily. If the skin and muscles are affected by the broken bone, infection may occur, hampering the bone's healing process.

The kind of treatment to take depends on the extent of the injury, the condition of the soft tissues and the degree of comminution. A cast is appropriate for fractures that are not severe, whereas severe fractures usually need surgery.

The operation requires an incision of between 15 and 20cms to be made in the injured leg to enable the broken bone to be put back in position. Implants such as crews, plates or long pins may be needed to fix the broken bones and to enable them to heal. But open surgery causes additional injury to the soft tissue which in turn affects the healing process.

Nowadays, minimal invasive surgery is often conducted on tibia fractures instead of conventional open surgery. Minimal invasive surgery is carried out with the help of a computer which enables placement of implants to be done through small cuts in the skin without full exposure of the injured tissue.

The advantages of minimal invasive surgery include better healing, less infection and shorter recovery time.