

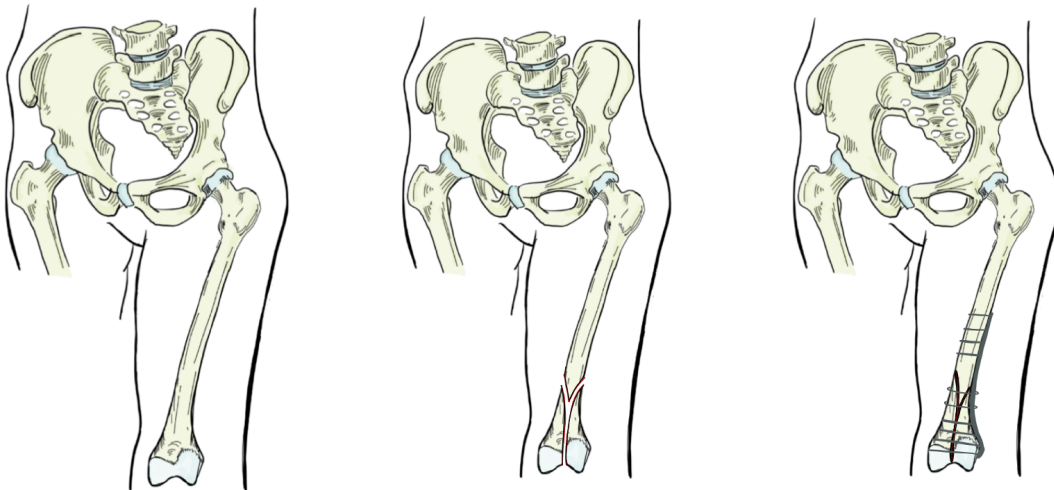
## Distal Femur Fracture

Fractures that involve the femur and knee joint are uncommon in Australia. They are usually as a result of a twisting injury, significant fall or a work or road accident. Sometimes stress fractures can arise in this bone.

Dr Stevens will assess your injury and organise x-rays and scans if required. If surgery is needed, Dr Stevens will help guide you through the process as a successful outcome will require recovery and rehabilitation sometimes with physiotherapists close to your home location in Melbourne.

A simple crack in the bone, while painful, will normally heal well. Dr Stevens will immobilise the leg and advise treatment with a cast or knee brace. Follow up x-rays will be required.

If the broken bone has moved too much or if there is instability of the knee, surgery to lock the bone back in place maybe the best option. This is normally done within few days of the injury. A plaster or brace may be required to stabilise the fracture prior to surgery.



Once fixed, you may be able to begin to move the hip, ankle and knee under the instruction of Dr Stevens. Placing weight on the leg will depend on the type of fracture you have and how it needed to be fixed.

A soft bandage and crepe will be placed over the leg following surgery. As the tissue and bone heal, a small amount of blood may appear on the dressings. This is normal. Sometimes, replacing the bandage is required to reinforce any areas that continue to bleed.

Elevate the leg for the first few days following surgery. You may be placed on blood thinning medications such as aspirin to help reduce the risk of clots.

**Discharge home:** After your surgery you will stay in hospital overnight and potentially for a few days. You will be discharged with pain relief tablets.

**Pain relief:** After surgery it is normal to have some pain or discomfort. The amount of surgery you have had will influence how much pain you can expect and how long you will need pain relief for. You will be given pain relief tablets to take home with you when you leave the hospital. Take these over the next week or so as you need.

**Looking after the Bandage:** You will need to keep the bandage clean and dry. The Crepe and Soft Bandage can come off when they get loose. You may want to re-wrap your knee and leg, otherwise you can discard these bandages. Keep the dressings that cover your wounds dry for the first 2 weeks.

**Movement after surgery:** You can move your foot, ankle, knee and hip straight away after surgery. Your knee will slowly be able to bend in the days that follow your operation. You may experience some knee pain in the weeks following surgery. You will need crutches or a frame to walk after surgery.

It is a good idea to keep moving even after your surgery, it helps your blood circulation and stops your body getting too weak. Avoid any strenuous activity for the first 2 weeks, but gentle movement and walking with your crutches is advised.

When you are resting or sleeping try to keep the leg straight and elevated on some pillows.

**Wound review:**

After 2 weeks you will have an appointment with Dr Stevens to have your wound checked, any stitches will be removed. Dr Stevens will then give you advice on exercises and physiotherapy.

**Driving:** You cannot drive until you have had your first review appointment with Dr Stevens. He will give you an indication then when you are likely to be able to drive again

**Returning to work:** This depends on the type of surgery to the tibia you have had and the type of work you do. Most surgeries will need 2-6 weeks off work, some will require longer, especially if you have a manual job.

As with all surgery, there are risks with fixing your tibial fracture. These include infection, delayed healing or wound problems. Difficulty with pain and range of movement may also occur. Sometimes, further surgery or surgery to removal the plate and screws is required.

- + Fever
- + Heavy bleeding or ooze from the wound
- + Increased swelling and redness around the surgery site
- + Pain in the calf muscles or difficulty breathing

If you have any of these problems, please call Dr Stevens or his rooms on **03 5752 5020**