

Orthopedic Emergencies: An Issue of Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America

Orthopedic emergencies are a common problem in the emergency department (ED). They can be caused by a variety of mechanisms, including trauma, sports injuries, falls, and accidents. Orthopedic emergencies can involve any part of the musculoskeletal system, including bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles.

Proper evaluation and treatment of orthopedic emergencies is essential to prevent further injury and ensure a successful recovery. This article will provide an overview of the most common orthopedic emergencies, including their diagnosis and treatment.



Orthopedic Emergencies, An Issue of Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America E-Book (The Clinics: Internal Medicine 38) by Jerry Boyd

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Common Orthopedic Emergencies

The following are some of the most common orthopedic emergencies:

Fractures

A fracture is a break in a bone. Fractures can be caused by trauma, falls, or overuse. Symptoms of a fracture include pain, swelling, bruising, and deformity.

Dislocations

A dislocation is a separation of two bones at a joint. Dislocations can be caused by trauma or falls. Symptoms of a dislocation include pain, swelling, and deformity.

Joint Injuries

Joint injuries can involve any part of a joint, including the ligaments, tendons, and cartilage. Joint injuries can be caused by trauma, overuse, or falls. Symptoms of a joint injury include pain, swelling, and difficulty moving the joint.

Soft Tissue Injuries

Soft tissue injuries involve the muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Soft tissue injuries can be caused by trauma, overuse, or falls. Symptoms of a soft tissue injury include pain, swelling, bruising, and difficulty moving the affected area.

Diagnosis of Orthopedic Emergencies

The diagnosis of an orthopedic emergency is based on the patient's history and physical examination. The doctor will ask about the mechanism of injury, the patient's symptoms, and any past medical history. The doctor will then perform a physical examination to assess the range of motion, stability, and alignment of the injured area.

In some cases, imaging studies may be necessary to confirm the diagnosis or to rule out other injuries. Imaging studies that may be used to diagnose orthopedic emergencies include X-rays, computed tomography (CT) scans, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans.

Treatment of Orthopedic Emergencies

The treatment of an orthopedic emergency depends on the type and severity of the injury. Treatment may include:

Immobilization

Immobilization is the process of preventing movement of an injured area. Immobilization can be achieved with a splint, cast, or brace.

Reduction

Reduction is the process of realigning a dislocated bone or joint. Reduction may be performed by closed reduction or open reduction. Closed reduction is performed without making an incision, while open reduction involves making an incision to access the injured area.

Surgery

Surgery may be necessary to repair a fracture, dislocation, or other orthopedic injury. Surgery may also be necessary to remove damaged tissue or to insert implants.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the process of restoring function to an injured area. Rehabilitation may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.

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