

Open Reduction With Internal Fixation of a Limb: Before Your Surgery

What is open reduction with internal fixation?

Open reduction with internal fixation is a type of surgery to fix a broken (fractured) bone. The doctor makes a cut, called an incision, in the skin over the bone. The doctor then moves the pieces of bone back into the normal position. This is called open reduction. The doctor may use special screws, pins, plates, or rods to hold the bone in place while it heals. This is called internal fixation. These devices may stay in your body from now on. The doctor closes the incision with stitches. You will have a scar, but it will fade with time.

You may spend from a few hours to a few days in the hospital. This depends on how serious your injury is. It usually takes 6 to 12 weeks for a broken bone to heal.

How soon you can go back to work and your normal routine depends on your job. It also depends on how long it takes your bone to heal. For example, if you have a broken leg and you sit at work, you may be able to go back in 1 to 2 weeks. But if your job requires you to walk or stand a lot, you may need to wait until your bone has healed.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How do you prepare for surgery?

Surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for surgery.



Preparing for surgery

- Do not shave the skin near the fractured bone for 2 or 3 days before surgery. This will reduce your risk of infection after surgery.
- Be sure you have someone to take you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine will make it unsafe for you to drive or get home on your own.
- Understand exactly what surgery is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if you should stop taking it before your surgery. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do. These medicines increase the risk of bleeding.
- Tell your doctor ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some may increase the risk of problems during your surgery. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking any of them before the surgery and how soon to do it.
- Make sure your doctor and the hospital have a copy of your advance directive. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets others know your health care wishes. It's a good thing to have before any type of surgery or procedure.

What happens on the day of surgery?



- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your surgery may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of surgery, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your surgery. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

At the hospital or surgery center



- Bring a picture ID.
- The area for surgery is often marked to make sure there are no errors.
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. The anesthesia may make you sleep. Or it may just numb the area being worked on.
- In most cases, the surgery takes about 1 to 2 hours. But it can take longer, depending on how serious the fracture is.

When should you call your doctor?



- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your surgery.
- You become ill before the surgery (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the surgery.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **F459** in the search box to learn more about "**Open Reduction With Internal Fixation of a Limb: Before Your Surgery**".

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