

Open Reduction and Internal Fixation - An Educational Guide



Orthopedic conditions are troublesome as they make it difficult for people to use the affected bone properly, and that directly impacts their daily life. Sometimes, the injury/condition is too serious that lifelong complications are on the cards. Serious orthopedic injuries like fractures often require surgery for the treatment, and this involves the use of [Ortho Implants](#).

Different types of orthopedic surgeries are there that are performed to fix various issues. Out of all, one of the most performed surgeries includes open reduction and internal fixation. This will be our topic of discussion in the post.

ORIF surgeries are recommended to treat severe fractures where the broken bone fragments get displaced much from their original position. Open fractures also require ORIF surgery for the treatment. Let us dive deep into the condition.

What is ORIF Surgery?

Abbreviated for open reduction and internal fixation, ORIF is one of the commonest surgeries that are performed to treat orthopedic issues like fractures. The reason why the procedure is named “open reduction and internal fixation” is because realignment of bones (reduction) requires an incision, and to stabilize the bones in their true position, internal fixation using metal plates, bone screws, pins, & wires are required.

When the broken bone fragments are not displaced much, closed reduction (realignment of bone fragments without incision) is enough followed by the application of a cast or splint for the immobilization of the fracture.

Why is ORIF Performed?

ORIF is an orthopedic surgical procedure that is especially performed in emergency cases. Some of the conditions that may require ORIF for the treatment include:

- ✓ Fractures involving multiple broken bone fragments
- ✓ Too much displacement of the affected bone
- ✓ Open fractures when the broken bones come out of the skin
- ✓ Fractures that do not heal properly with closed reduction

What Are the Factors on Which ORIF Depends?

ORIF may be a successful and commonly performed surgical procedure but, its success and recovery of the patient depend upon several factors. Those factors include:

- ✓ Age of the patient
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Underlying health conditions
- ✓ The severity and the location of the fracture

How ORIF is Performed?

Open reduction and internal fixation is performed in an operation theatre under general anesthesia by an experienced orthopedic surgeon. Before the surgery, the healthcare service provider performs various pathological and imaging tests to ensure that the procedure can be safely performed.

Depending upon the severity of the condition, the healthcare service provider will decide whether the surgery is required immediately or can be performed after some time.

During the surgery, the surgeon makes an incision on the skin to expose the fractured bone. The size of the incision will depend upon the location and severity of the fracture. After the incision is made, the surgeon will remove soft tissues and other structures to get an unobstructed view of the fractured bone. After this, the surgeon will realign the broken bone pieces into correct alignment and place. This procedure is known as open reduction.

Once open reduction is done, internal fixation will be the next step. Here, the surgeon will stabilize the realigned bone pieces using orthopedic implants and instruments like orthopedic implants plates, metal screws, wires, and pins. After the internal fixation is done, the surgeon will confirm that everything is in its right place and then close the incision using stitches or staples. If required, a cast or splint may also be applied.

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