

Injuries of the knee & leg

Acute knee ligament injuries: common in sports & RTA.

Knee stability depends on joint capsule, intra- & extra-articular lig. & controlling muscles rather than on bony structures.

MOI: Valgus force → MCL tear; Valgus + rotation → MCL + ACL tear; Valgus + rotation + weight bearing → MCL + ACL + med. meniscus tear; Varus force → LCL tear; Varus + rotation → LCL + ACL tear; Dashboard injury → PCL tear.

CF: twisting injury → immediate painful doughy swelling (hemarthrosis) while in meniscus injury, swelling is *late* & fluctuant (synovial effusion).

Look for site of maximum tenderness, bruises & abrasion.

Test for ligament tear:

Partial tear is painful with no abnormal movement, if in doubt → stress view.

Complete tear: painless abnormal mvt → If knee open with valgus or varus stress in 30° flexion → only collateral tear; If open in extension → capsule + collateral + cruciate tear; Anteroposterior stability: posterior sag → PCL tear; anterior drawer test → ACL; Lachman test → ACL.

Imaging:

X-ray: may show avulsion # e.g. ACL avulse tibial spine.

MRI: to differentiate partial from complete tear.

Arthroscopy: is contraindicated in acute complete tear.

Treatment:

Partial tear: aspirate hemarthrosis → 6wks brace or crepe bandage with early active exercise.

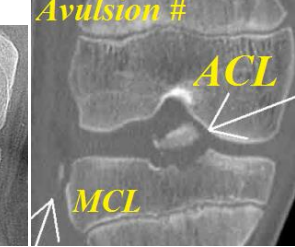
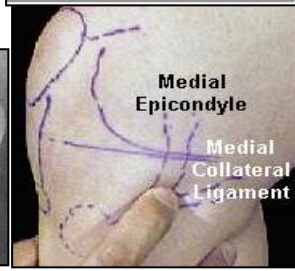
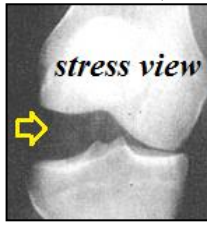
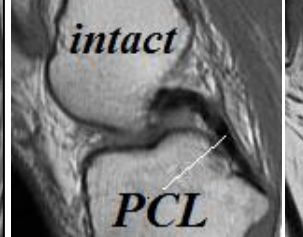
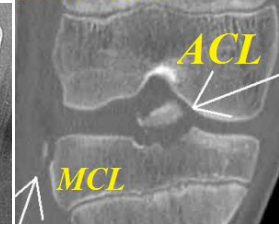
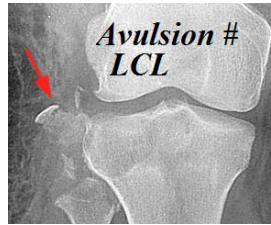
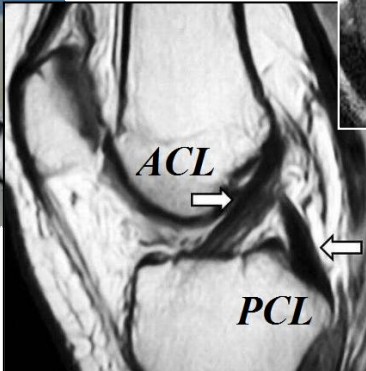
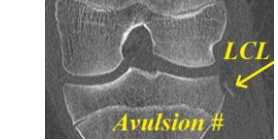
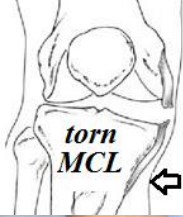
Complete tear: MCL or LCL tear: 6wks brace → exercise.

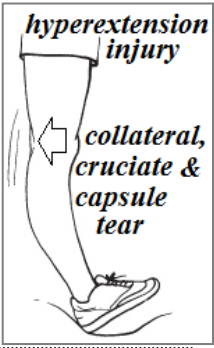
ACL or PCL tear: 6wks brace → exercise; later if instability persists → ligament reconstruction.

Combined collateral + ACL or PCL: 6wks brace → exercise → later reconstruction.

Complications: 1-adhesion: occurs with partial tear bec. torn fibers stick to nearby tissues; **CF:** attacks of pain & 'giving way'; MRI differentiate it from meniscus tear; **R:** physiotherapy.

2-instability: the knee continue to give way → OA.

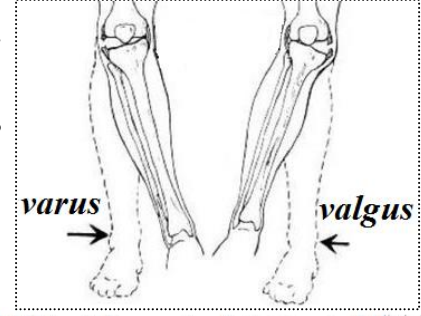




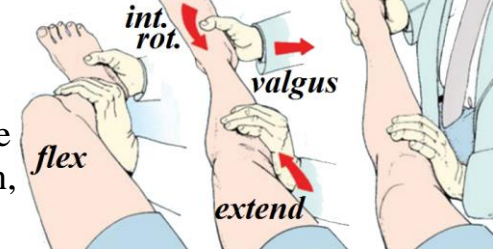
Chronic ligamentous instability ('giving way'): either appear early after acute injury or progressively later. It is often tolerated in patient with usual activity rather than sport activity.

CF: feeling of knee insecurity & giving way.
O/E: quadriceps wasting; no tenderness; see the patient walking, standing on one leg, test the knee for hyperextension.

Tests for **abnormal** movement:
For **Side-to-side** stability → varus/ valgus stress tests.
For **Anteroposterior** stability → anterior & posterior drawer & Lachman test.
For **Rotatory** stability → modified drawer & pivot shift test.



pivot shift test for anterolat. stability (ACL, LCL & capsule)

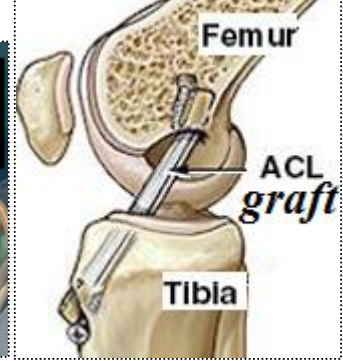
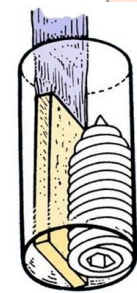


Imaging: MRI is reliable for cruciate & meniscus injury.

Arthroscopy: is both for diagnosis & surgical R.
R: 6 mths of quadriceps & hamstring exercise → re-examine → most of patients will not need operation except sportsmen, intolerable giving way & recurrent locking of meniscal tear.

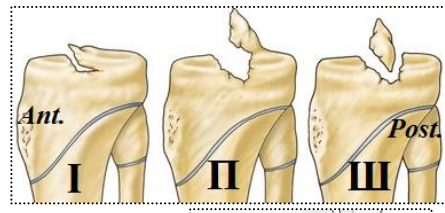
Operative R: Arthroscopic reconstruction
Isolated ACL tear → replacement with strip of patellar tendon graft with bone at either end.

Anteromedial & anterolateral rotatory instability: ACL+MCL or LCL → ACL reconstruction is enough.
Posteromedial & posterolateral rotatory instability: PCL+MCL or LCL → repair of all damaged structures.

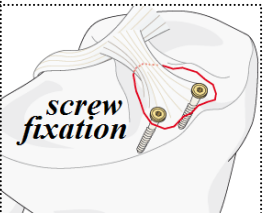
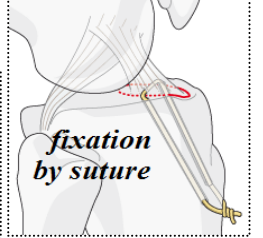
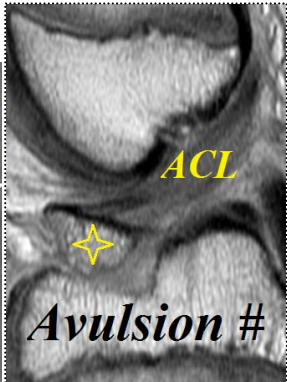
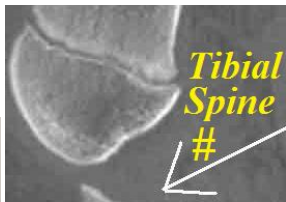
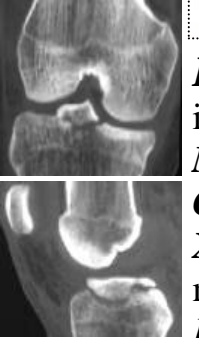


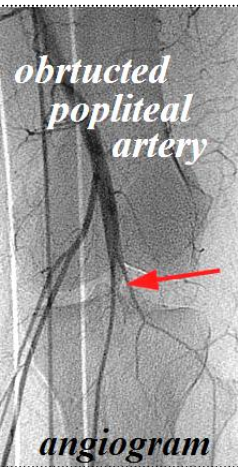
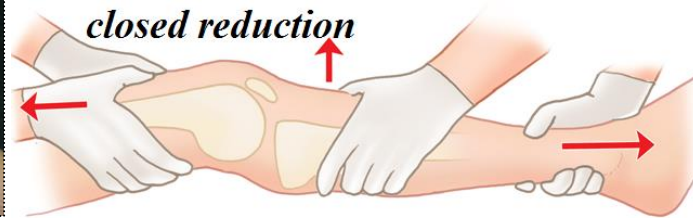
Fractured tibial spine:

is the adolescent variant of ACL tear.
MOI: ACL traction by severe twisting or varus/valgus force.
CF: swollen tender knee with doughy feel.
X-ray: the # may be missed; the spine (intercondylar eminence) may be: **I**-undisplaced; **II**-hinged; **III**-completely displaced.



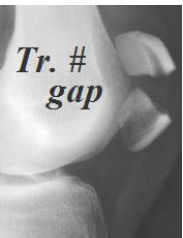
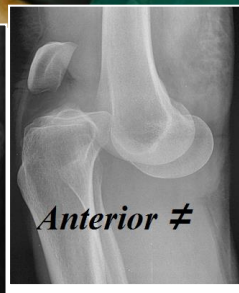
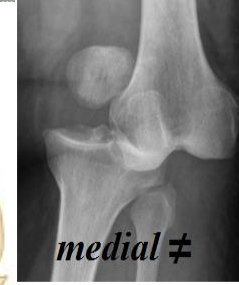
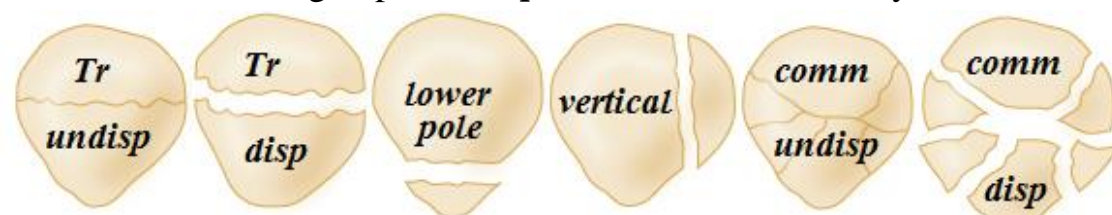
R: UGA the joint is aspirated & manipulated to full extension → 6wks plaster cylinder. If there is block to full extension or the fragment is significantly displaced → ORIF.





Dislocation of the knee:

MOI: a force tearing capsule, cruciate & coll. lig. → knee ≠.
CF: severe swelling, bruising + gross deformity. 20% will have popliteal art. &/ or peroneal n. injury.
 35% of ≠ reduce spontaneously after injury (occult ≠).
X-ray: ≠ can be in any direction (ant., post., lat., med.); any lig. can avulse a piece of its bony attachment.
R: Urgent CR UGA → back-splint with frequent check of the circulation in the 1st week, later → hinged brace.
If CR fails, vascular injury or open ≠ → **open reduction** + lig. repair. **Complication:** knee instability or stiffness.



Fractured patella:

Anatomy: the patella is a sesamoid bone in the quadriceps tendon; vastus medialis & lateralis also inserted into medial & lateral sides of the patella; the medial & lateral extensor retinacula are expansion of quadriceps bypassing the patella & inserting into the upper tibia. The main function of the patella is to ↑ the efficiency of the quadriceps.



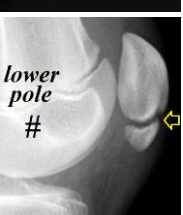
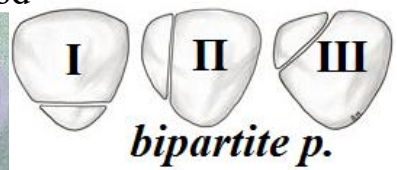
MOI: either **Direct injury** like dashboard blow or fall onto the knee → undisplaced crack or comminuted (stellate) # with no tear of the extensor expansion. **Indirect injury** by traction of quadriceps contraction against resistance → transverse # with gap bec. of extensor expansion tear.



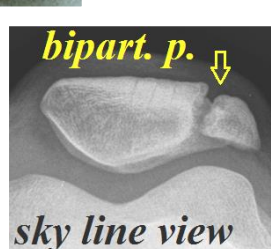
CF: swollen bruised knee; if direct injury the patient can lift his leg & no gap can be felt in contrast to indirect injury. Aspiration → blood + fat droplets.



X-ray: bi- or tri-partite patella (with smooth rounded edge) should not be mistaken for #.

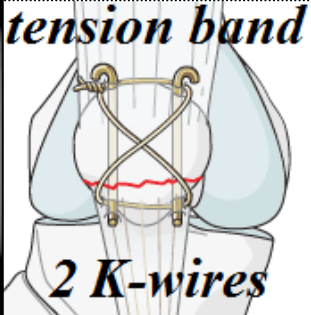
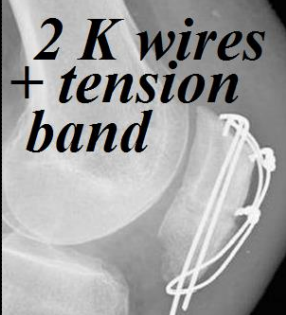
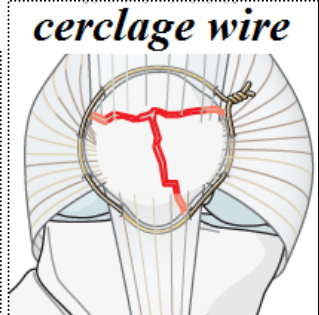
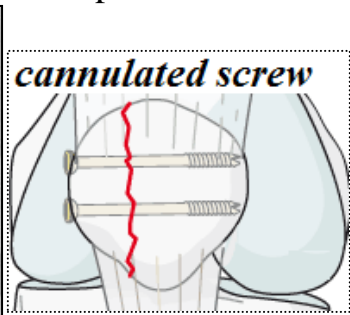


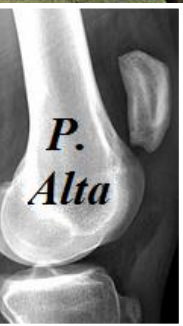
R: **Undisplaced #:** aspirate hemarthrosis → 4wks cast + exercise. **Comminuted #:** if undisplaced → the same R. If displaced → immediate patellectomy (to avoid later patellofemoral OA).



Transverse # with gap: ORIF + repair of extensor expansion. 2K-wires + tension band, screw, cerclage wire & patella plate.

Complication: patellofemoral OA.





Dislocation of patella: is almost always lateral with tear of med. patellofemoral lig. & med. retinaculum. **MOI:** direct force is rare; often indirect twisting injury → quadriceps contraction while the knee in valgus & external rotation.

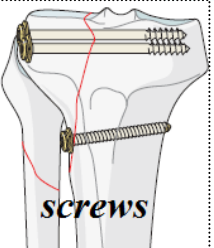
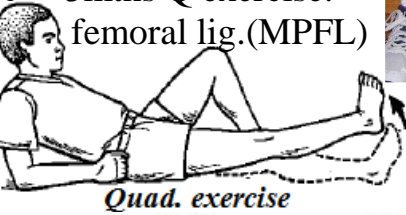
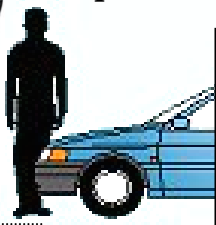
Risk factors: genu valgum, tibial torsion, patella alta, shallow intercondylar groove, lig. laxity & weak vastus medialis obliquus (VMO).

CF: the patient fall to the ground; the patella is felt on lateral side of the knee; knee movement is impossible. Often it reduces spontaneously leaving tenderness & bruises on medial side.

X-ray: the patella is displaced laterally & there may be osteochondral #.

R: push patella back into its place → 3wks brace → 3mths Q exercise. Some prefer operative repair of medial patello femoral lig. (MPFL) to prevent recurrent ≠ in severe injury.

Complication: recurrent ≠ (20%).



Tibial plateau fractures: adults (50-60).

MOI: varus or valgus force + axial loading like car striking a pedestrian (bumper #) or FFH.

Schatzker's classification:

- 1 - lateral condyle split #.
- 2 - lateral condyle split-depressed #.
- 3 - lateral condyle depressed #.
- 4 - medial condyle split or depression #.
- 5 - bicondylar #.
- 6 - uni or bicondylar + subcondylar #.

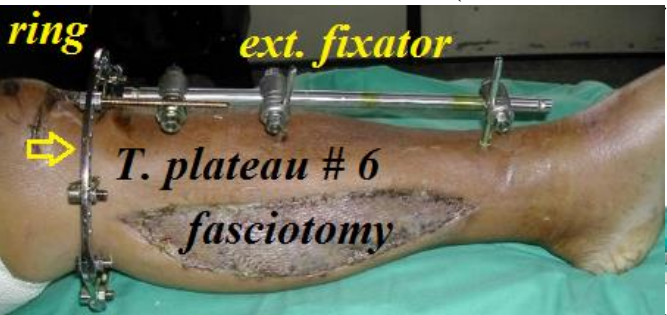
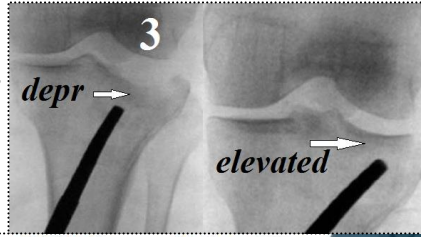
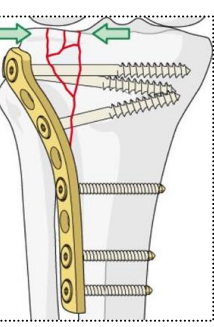
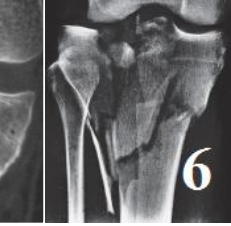
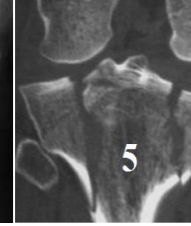
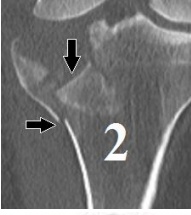
CF: swollen, deformed & bruised knee with doughy feel; look for vascular injury, compartment syndrome, ligament tear & nerve injury.

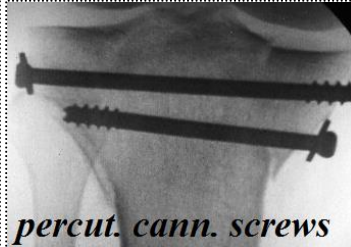
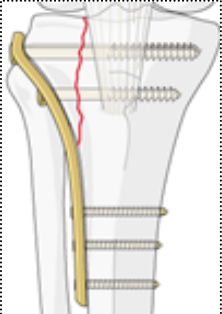
X-ray: AP & lateral views; CT & MRI.

R:

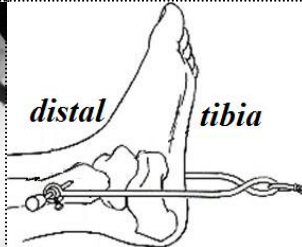
Conservative: aspirate the hemarthrosis & apply crepe bandage → 2wks continuous passive motion (CPM) machine → 6wks hinged brace NWB → 6wks PWB.

Operative: ORIF → screws alone or plate (locked or buttress) + elevation of any articular depression & support with bone graft. In severe soft tissue injury, open # or severe # comminution, external fixator (± minimal internal fixation) gives better result.

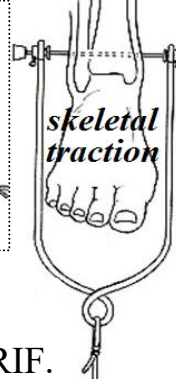




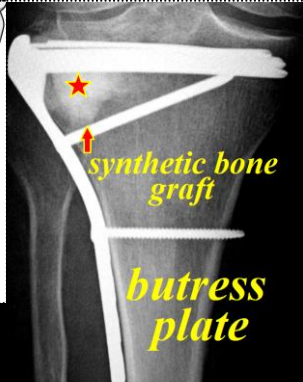
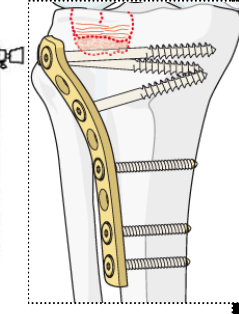
percut. cann. screws



distal tibia

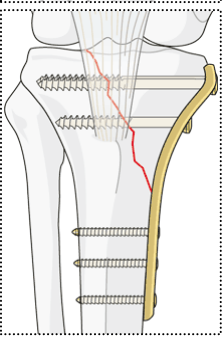


skeletal traction



synthetic bone graft

butress plate



double-butress plate



I&IV: If undisplaced → conservative
If displaced → ORIF.

II&III: If depression >5mm & young → ORIF.
If <5mm or elderly → conservative.

V & VI: if severely displaced, there is a risk of comp. syndrome.
If undisplaced or slightly displaced in elderly → conservative.
If displaced → ORIF or circular-frame external fixation or 6wks skeletal traction → 6wks brace.

Complications: Early: compartment syndrome: may be seen in closed type 5&6 due to excessive bleeding.

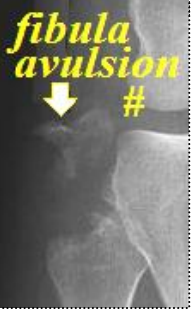
Late: knee stiffness, varus or valgus deformity & OA(after 5-10yrs).

Fractures of proximal end of fibula:

MOI: either direct blow or indirect twisting injury.

The isolated # is rare & needs no R but **look for** associated injuries:
1-ankle # or ligament tear(Maisonneuve #); always x-ray the **ankle**.
2-knee lig. injury; always check **knee** stability.
3-peroneal nerve injury.

late complication: peroneal nerve entrapment.



fibula avulsion #



prox. #

lig. tear

Fractures of tibia & fibula: fracture tibia is common & often it is open because of its subcutaneous position.

MOI: Indirect injury(**low energy** e.g. sport) → spiral or oblique #; bone fragment may pierce the covering skin from within.
Direct injury(**high energy** e.g. RTA) → comminuted # + overlying skin crush or split.

Pathological anatomy: # healing depends on:

1- Severity of soft tissue injury: **Tscherne's** classification of skin lesion in **closed** #: 1-no lesion; 2-contusion; 3-localized degloving; 4-extensive degloving; 5-necrosis from contusion.

For **open** # → **Gustilo's** classification.

2- Severity of bone injury: high energy injury → comminuted & open(G III A,B,C).

Low energy injury → spiral & closed or open(GI or II).

3- Stability of the #. 4- Degree of contamination.

CF: swollen deformed leg & externally rotated foot.

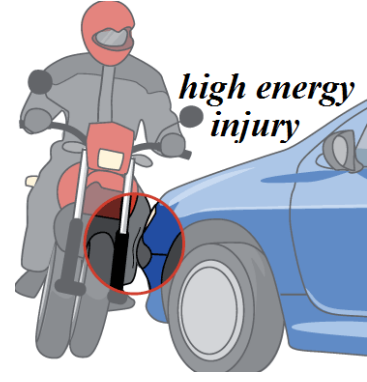
Look for: open wound; skin bruising, crushing & tenting; weak or absent pulse, compartment syndrome & nerve injury.

X-ray: the entire leg with knee & ankle should be seen.

Management: Aim: 1-limit ST damage & preserve skin cover; 2-prevent compartment syndrome;



low energy spiral #



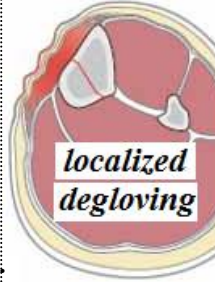
high energy injury



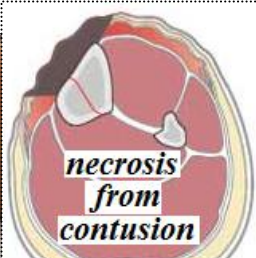
contusion



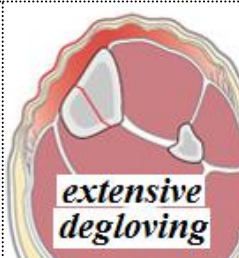
Necrosis



localized degloving



necrosis from contusion



extensive degloving



high energy comm. #



- 3-reduce & hold the #;
- 4-start early weight bearing;
- 5-early joint movement.

Conservative R: for *stable* low energy # if undisplaced or slightly displaced with little soft tissue damage → full length cast (from mid thigh to metatarsal necks) & elevation for 2wks → checking x-ray & cast renewed if become loose → 16wks PWB. If skin viability is doubtful → 2wks observation in back slab & elevation → casting.



Operative R: for displaced high energy *unstable* # with more ST damage:

Closed intramedullary nailing (for closed shaft # & open G I, II, & IIIA);

Plate fixation (open plating for metaphyseal # or MIPO for shaft & metaphyseal #)

& **External fixation** for open # G IIIB & C & closed # with severe comminution &/or severe ST damage.



Complications: Early:

- 1-vas. injury: prox. 1/3 # may injure pop. art. → repair.
- 2-comp. syndrome (prox. #): fasciotomy → ext. fixation.
- 3-infection: 1% for G I & 30% for G IIIC.



- Late:** 1-malunion: 1.5cm shortening & 7° angulation are acceptable, if more or mal-rotation → tibial osteotomy.
- 2-delayed union & nonunion: especially in high energy #, infection or bone loss → stable fixation & bone graft.
- 3-joint stiffness: of ankle may last 12 months.

