

# No Bones About It

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## Welcome To The New *No Bones About It* Newsletter

Welcome Friends and Colleagues to the newly revised edition of *No Bones About It*, a newsletter developed especially for Danbury area physicians. In this busy world of medicine, consider *No Bones About It* a quick way to get a "no bones" look at some of the bone-related ailments you may be seeing in your practice and how orthopedic surgeons can lend a hand. Our goal is to familiarize physicians with the non-surgical and surgical options available in the orthopedic world as well as provide glimpses into the future of our rapidly evolving science, impending legislation or critical issues in insurance coverage. We invite your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

## Fracture of the Talus Can Mimic Ankle Sprain

A fracture of the talus, the small bone that sits between the calcaneus and the two bones of the lower leg, tibia and fibula, can sometimes mimic a simple ankle sprain because of the tenderness on the outer side of the ankle and severe bruising. Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of the fractured talus but falls from considerable heights and, lately, snowboarding, are often the culprits. Very often, injuries to the talus go hand-in-hand (of leg-in-leg) with injuries to the lower back, according to Scott Gray, MD, a foot and ankle specialist at Connecticut Family Orthopedics.

"When treating a patient with a suspected talar fracture, always ask the patient to describe how the injury occurred," says Dr. Gray. "X-rays of the foot and ankle are the first course of action although in some cases, the X-ray will not show the fractures, so a CT scan may be needed to pinpoint the location of the fracture. A fracture that breaks through the skin has an increased risk of infection."

Talar fractures are marked by acute pain, an inability to bear weight and considerable swelling and tenderness. Untreated talar fracture can cause arthritis and chronic pain, and the bone may collapse. In rare cases, a talar fracture can be treated without surgery if X-rays show that the bones have not moved out of alignment.

## Knee Arthroscopy Trial Applauded by Orthopedic Surgeons

The July New England Journal of Medicine report on a randomized, placebo-controlled trial involving use of arthroscopy in treatment of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee has resulted in a whirlwind of controversy in the profession but Ronald Ripps, MD, as well as the specialists here at Connecticut Family Orthopedics, concur with the opinion of William W. Tipton Jr., MD, executive vice president of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

"In the recent study on the role of arthroscopy in osteoarthritis of the knee, we applaud the authors and the patients who participated in this placebo-controlled investigation. Evidence-based medicine should be a guiding light in today's health care delivery and this study confirms the conventional orthopaedic wisdom on the limited value of arthroscopic cleansing of arthritic knees, he said. "The strengths of the study include the large size of the patient groups, an excellent control group and the long-term patient assessment. The weaknesses include a potential selection bias caused by the number of patients who decided not to participate and the nonspecific indications for arthroscopy. Additionally, data were not stratified for body weight, mal-alignment and mechanical symptoms. Arthroscopic surgery may relieve mechanical symptoms (buckling, locking, etc.) thus delaying the need for more aggressive surgery such as total knee replacement.

## Legislative Update

President George Bush's call for a 250,000 cap on pain and suffering awards is a step in the right direction to help ease escalating insurance costs for doctors.

"The system must be fixed," President Bush said. "The unpredictability of our liability system means that even frivolous cases-people call them junk lawsuits-carry the risk of enormous burdens."

Bush said the present system forces many doctors away from high-risk practices. Reining in medical malpractice litigation would make health care safer, as well as more affordable and available for all, he said. Under the legislation Bush backs, damages for losses such as wages and medical expenses would not be capped. The bill, intended to override state laws, also would curtail lawyers' fees and patients' ability to file suit over old cases. Contact your congressmen to voice your approval of this important pending legislation.

*No Bones About It* is published by Connecticut Family Orthopedics, 33 Hospital Ave., Danbury, CT. Physician comments or suggestions for future editions may be sent to Gabe Carubia, Practice Administrator, who may be reached at 203-792-5558; via email at [ct.fmyl.orthopdcs@snet.net](mailto:ct.fmyl.orthopdcs@snet.net); or via fax at 203-731-3213.