

Hanging holiday lights holds hidden danger, surgeon warns

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Slips and falls from ladders can result in serious foot and ankle injuries.

(HealthDay)—Putting up holiday lights can lead to serious foot injuries from slips and falls, an expert warns.

For example, a fall from a ladder can cause a broken heel, said Dr. Pedro Cosculluela, an orthopedic surgeon at Houston Methodist Hospital who specializes in foot and ankle problems.

"A heel [bone](#) fracture is a terrible, life-changing event, and I see too many of these cases around the holidays after people fall off their ladders," he said in a hospital news release.

"Heel bone fractures are commonly associated with skin and soft tissue injuries, which need immediate medical attention because they can quickly lead to infection," he explained.

Many people with broken heels require [surgery](#) with plates and screws to put the bone back together and hold it in place.

"The biggest complication these patients face isn't the surgery, but wound [healing](#), as traditional, long incisions can injure the skin's blood supply which lengthens the healing process," Cosculluela said. "When possible, I perform this surgery with minimally invasive techniques to help reduce the risk of wound healing issues."

When hanging [holiday lights](#), inspect your ladder before use, secure it to the house, and extend it at least three feet above the roof, the U.S Occupational Safety and Health Administration advises.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [winter health and safety](#).

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