

Ask the trauma experts.

You asked. We answered.

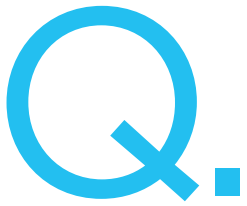
Dr. Bracken Burns, trauma program medical director for Ballad Health and provider for ETSU Health, and **Dr. Daniel Krenk**, orthopedic trauma director and trauma orthopedic surgeon at Johnson City Medical Center, answer your questions about how our Level 1 Trauma Center is keeping our communities in safe hands.



Bracken Burns, DO
Surgery
Surgical critical care



Daniel Krenk, DO
Orthopedic surgery
Orthopedic trauma



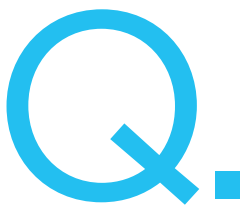
What is a trauma?

In emergency rooms and trauma centers, a trauma can refer to any person who has suffered a physical injury. It can be minor, serious, life-threatening or potentially life-threatening.



The most serious cases of these, though, are called trauma alerts, and they're the patients in our Level 1 Trauma Center at Johnson City Medical Center and the ones most likely to be seen by highly trained orthopedic trauma surgeons. Trauma alerts require extremely advanced assessment and care, and time is of the essence.

A small percentage of all patients in the emergency room are considered trauma alerts. All other patients are assessed and treated by emergency physicians and on-call specialists. For instance, a patient having a heart attack is assessed and treated by the emergency room doctor, and a cardiologist who is on call, or the patient's chosen cardiologist, will be consulted to help with the care. In the case of an active trauma alert, an immediate assessment by a highly skilled trauma surgeon is the highest standard of care.

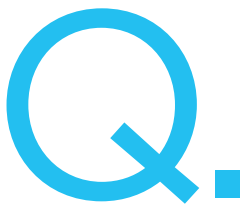


What is an orthopedic traumatologist?

An orthopedic traumatologist is an orthopedic surgeon who has completed a specialized fellowship training after the physician has completed their orthopedic residency. These specialists focus on the treatment of complex injuries, and they excel in certain injury patterns, such as major fractures to the pelvis. They are particularly skilled in assessing the extent of the injury and developing a treatment plan in partnership with the trauma team.



At the Level 1 Trauma Center at Johnson City Medical Center, we have four fellowship-trained orthopedic traumatologists who respond immediately to major traumas and provide initial oversight, ensuring we're able to treat the most critical injuries first. This is the first time our region has benefited from having this extensive and consistent coverage for immediate assessment and treatment.



Why does Ballad Health have orthopedic traumatologists?

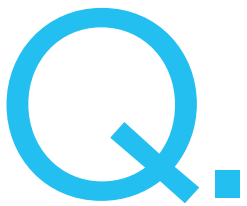
This is the highest standard of care, and the elected leaders of the medical staff — most of whom are independently practicing physicians, and all of whom care deeply about the consistency of availability of orthopedic trauma surgeons for the benefit of their patients, asked Johnson City Medical Center leadership to pursue this effort on our journey to seek full verification of our Level 1 Trauma Center by the American College of Surgeons — also a first for our region.



Full-time trauma coverage by fellowship-trained surgeons is a necessary step in helping Johnson City Medical Center meet the stringent requirements to become a verified Level 1 Trauma Center — something our entire region can celebrate. We are also proud of our recent ranking by Quantros in its 2023 CareChex® awards as one of the nation's top-decile performing trauma centers for patient safety, and this is evidence of our commitment to provide the best care.

The best practice is to have 24/7 orthopedic traumatologist care available, because major traumatic injuries can happen at any time, and we always want to provide the same standard of care to everyone.

This is a commitment we've made to our communities — to improve the quality of care and patient outcomes. It's an exciting step forward for our entire region.



What if I already have a doctor? Can I see them in the emergency room?

Yes! All patients have the right to request care from any physician they prefer.



In major trauma centers, when a trauma alert patient arrives in the emergency room, they are immediately evaluated by a trauma surgeon and the care team. Any other patient that presents to the emergency room, is evaluated by a board-certified emergency medicine physician. If a patient needs specialty care, such as cardiology or orthopedic services, there is a process by which the specialty provider — either an on-call physician or a patient's preferred provider — can be called.

The ability for patients who are able — meaning they are awake and oriented — to request a specific provider has not changed. Trauma alert patients, however, are not always fully conscious upon arrival. The traumatologists are the first team to evaluate them, determine the best plan and provide quality oversight and timely intervention.

We are grateful to the community physicians who are available for on-call care in our emergency rooms, and all continue to be welcome to participate in call where they are qualified to do so. The addition of orthopedic traumatologists has not displaced them — they will still be available to care for their established patients, as well as anyone else who needs or requests them.