Epiphysiodesosis and eight-plates

The consultant surgeon has recommended an operation to completely stop the growth (epiphysiodesosis) in your child's leg or temporarily stop the growth using eight-plates.

The operations
Epiphysiodesosis: is the term used to describe stopping a growth plate (the growing part of a bone). When one leg is shorter than the other this operation may be used to stop the growth of the longer leg. The timing is crucial and is calculated to allow the shorter leg to catch up by the time growth stops. Epiphysiodesosis may also be used to correct an angular deformity of the leg.

Eight-plates: are used to correct a deformity effecting the angle of the bone, for example, knock knees. They can also be used to temporarily stop the growth of a leg if one is longer than the other. They are inserted into one side of the growth plate, guiding growth of the limbs until they are straight.

The operation
You will be asked to bring your child into hospital the day before the operation. Usually children stay in hospital one to two nights after the operation.

Your child will need a general anaesthetic (medicine given to make you go to sleep) for this operation. The surgeon will discuss with you and your child what the operation involves.

There may be one or two scars, one at the top of the tibia (just below the knee) and or one at the end of the femur (just above the knee). There will be a bandage over the wounds.

The stitches do not need to be removed as they are dissolvable.

Aftercare
Your child will be able to walk with crutches as soon as they are comfortable. You may find that a wheelchair is helpful for going out. You can contact the Red Cross to get one and it is a good idea to let them know as soon as you know the operation date.

The wounds will be checked in the clinic or by your GP practice nurse, they need to be kept dry for 12 days.

Encourage normal knee movement and when comfortable your child can go back to school.

Your child will be seen regularly in the clinic to check leg length difference or angular correction.

If eight-plates have been used, these are removed using a general anaesthetic. When your child's legs are straight, and if the growth plates remain open, and no more growth is likely the plates will be left inside.

If the operation is not done the length of the legs will remain different or the angle deformity will remain.

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Possible complications
The healthcare team will make your child’s stay in hospital and the treatment they receive as safe as possible. However complications can happen. You should ask the healthcare team if there is anything you do not understand.

The anaesthetist will be able to discuss with you the possible complications of your child having an anaesthetic.

Pain relieving medicine will be given as prescribed by the anaesthetist or the doctor.

Bleeding can happen during or after surgery and there maybe scarring as a result of the surgical cut.

If the surgical wound becomes infected it will usually settle with antibiotics but may sometimes need further surgery.

There may be altered feeling at the operation site, this may be temporary or permanent.

Specific Complications of Surgery
Epiphysiodesis: If the operation is performed too late the leg length difference may reduce but still remain different lengths. If done too early the length difference will correct but if more surgery is not done the difference will increase again on the other leg.

Eight-plates: very occasionally these can move and may need replacing. Incomplete correction or deformity in the other direction may happen, this depends on the timing of surgery. Follow up is essential to avoid these possibilities.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact
Julia Judd or Liz Wright advanced nurse practitioners: 023 8079 4991
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Your GP

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.