

Fracture aftercare

Information for patients, parents and guardians

Your child's fracture has now healed and their cast has been removed. It's normal for the injured limb to feel a bit strange for a while, because the weight and support of the cast is gone, and for the joints that were in the cast to feel a little stiff. Your child may not regain full movement straight away. This will improve in two to four weeks.

Upper limb (arm) injury

We advise using the arm that was injured for daily activities such as washing, dressing and eating normally. By using the arm your child will put it through its normal range of movement and the stiffness will get better. It may take some time for the full range of movement to return, this is normal. We advise that your child does not to take part in contact sports (such as rugby) for four to six weeks as advised by the doctor or nurse practitioner in clinic. Your child can go swimming and do non-contact sports during this time.

Four weeks after your child's plaster is removed they should be able to do the following:

If they had a shoulder injury they should be able to:

- shrug their shoulders
- move the shoulder in a circular movement
- lift their arm above their head
- fold their arm behind their back

If your child had an elbow injury they should be able to:

- straighten the arm
- bend the arm to touch their shoulder
- with the elbow bent, hold their hand with the palm facing down
- with the elbow bent, hold their hand with the palm facing up

If your child had a wrist or forearm injury they should be able to:

- bend their wrist up and down
- move all of their fingers

If your child had a finger injury they should be able to:

- fully bend and straighten the finger

If your child's shoulder, elbow, wrist or finger is still stiff or painful after four weeks, please contact us and we will see them again in the clinic.

Lower limb (leg) injury

We will advise you when it's ok for your child to return to full weight-bearing (taking all their body weight on the injured leg). They should gradually practice walking without help or using their crutches or Zimmer frame at home. When your child feels comfortable and confident they can then gradually increase the amount they walk outdoors. By walking around they will put the leg through its normal range of movement and the ankle stiffness will get better. Your child can do simple ankle exercises, moving it up and down, side to side and around in a circle.

It may be some weeks before they are able to take all of their weight on the affected limb (fully weight-bear). It's common to walk with a limp, or for the foot on the injured side to be turned outwards for a few weeks after the plaster is removed. Your child should not take part in sports until advised by the doctor or nurse practitioner in clinic.

Four weeks after the plaster is removed your child should be able to do the activities below.

If they had an upper leg fracture they should be able to:

- stand on the leg
- walk unaided
- move the whole of the injured leg forward, backwards and sideways when standing on the other leg

If your child had a lower leg fracture they should be able to:

- stand on the leg
- walk unaided
- bend and straighten their knee
- move the ankle comfortably

If your child had a foot injury they should be able to:

- stand on the affected foot
- walk unaided
- bend and extend their ankle
- move all of their toes

If your child's hip, knee, ankle or foot is still stiff or painful after four weeks, please contact us and we will see them in the clinic again.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The nurse practitioners: 023 8120 4991 or mobile: 07584 402438

Email: childrensorthopaedic@uhs.nhs.uk

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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