

## **What is a fractured tibia and / or fibula?**

It is where one or both of the bones in the lower leg are broken.

## **How does this happen?**

A fractured tibia and fibula is a fairly common injury of the lower limb in children.

The cause may be from indirect trauma (e.g. a twisting force) or from a direct force.

## **What investigations are performed?**

An X-ray will confirm the position and type of fracture. This enables the doctor to decide the best management.

## **Treatment**

Your child may need a plaster cast, usually from their toes to above the knee; to keep the broken bone ends in position. Sometimes only a half plaster is applied until the swelling at the fracture site has reduced.

A general anaesthetic may be required to realign the bones into a good position. This is called manipulation under general anaesthetic. Very occasionally an operation is needed to internally fix the bones with either a metal plate, screw, wires or a flexible nail. A plaster cast is normally applied following correct positioning of the bone ends.

Once the plaster is put on, your child will need to stay in bed for 1 - 2 days to allow the plaster to dry. Their leg will be raised on pillows or a frame to reduce the swelling that occurs after a fracture. If they have a half plaster (backslab), this will be completed all the way around the leg before they are discharged.

Painkillers will be given regularly to keep your child pain free.

A further x-ray will be taken to check the position of the bone ends before your child is discharged.

Your child may be in plaster between 6-12 weeks in total. During this time the plaster may be changed (a separate leaflet is available to explain plaster care).

If internal metalwork is used to secure the bone ends, this will need to be removed under a general anaesthetic.

You will be advised the timing of this procedure at the outpatient appointment

## **When will my child be ready to be discharged?**

Your child will be shown how to mobilise non-weight bearing with either a frame or crutches by the physiotherapist. You will be shown how to assist. Younger children do not manage crutches and may need a wheelchair or buggy.

An outpatient appointment will be booked for 1-2 weeks, to check the plaster and to have a repeat x-ray to see how the fracture is healing.

You will be taught how to look after your child's plaster and given a care of plaster information card. Your child will not be able to go to school until after first clinic appointment.

The physiotherapist, occupational therapist and nurse will discuss any problems that you may foresee at home, for instance, the need for a wheelchair. This is obtainable from the British Red Cross. Please ask the staff for the telephone number of the nearest centre to your home.

**Children's Unit**

If you have any questions or  
concerns. please contact:

Nurse Practitioner on  
023 8079 4991 or  
Switchboard on 023 8077 7222  
ask for bleep no. 2641  
or  
Ward G3 on 023 8079 6486  
or your GP

**FRACTURED TIBIA  
AND/OR FIBULA  
(Lower Leg Bones)**

**FAMILY  
INFORMATION  
LEAFLET**

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2003  
Revised Nov 2004