

Care after your child's treatment at the Fracture Clinic for a limb injury

Musculoskeletal Department

Information for Patients, Parents & Carers

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Introduction

Most children who come to the Fracture Clinic have been referred by either the Emergency Department or their GP.

Before they come to clinic, all of their notes and X-rays will be reviewed by the Orthopaedic Trauma Team. The treatment plan will be decided on this day. They will decide if your child needs to return for further X-rays or surgery and how long they should remain in a plaster or splint for.

Don't worry if this is different from the guidance you were given by the Emergency Department. The Orthopaedic Team has the specialist knowledge needed to decide the most appropriate treatment for your child and their injury.

Opening hours

Fracture Clinic:

Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5pm

The Professor Harper Trauma Clinic:

Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10.30am to 6pm

Contact numbers

Main switchboard:	0300 303 1573
Appointments:	0116 258 5138
Problems with a cast or injury:	0116 258 5430
Bed co-ordinator:	0300 303 1573 Bleep 4559
Theater schedulers:	0300 303 1573 Bleep 4222
Emergency Department:	0116 258 5121 or 0116 258 5122
Transport booking (for eligible patients):	0345 266 9662

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

When your child has a cast and what to look out for

Your child has had a backslab plaster of Paris plaster applied to allow for any immediate swelling. This plaster takes about 48 hours to dry so they need to keep this off any hard surfaces. For leg injuries this plaster is not strong enough to walk on so they should not put any weight on it.

Depending on their injury you may be asked to bring them back for a complete plaster in 2 to 4 days time. For leg injuries you will be advised as to whether they can put any weight through this plaster and how much. If they can, you will be given a plaster shoe for them to wear.

The cast should be kept dry.

Do not insert any objects down the plaster including pens and toys.

Contact the clinic if they have any of the following (you will need to make an appointment for them to return):

- Pain or cramp in the calf that doesn't resolve.
- Sore areas under the plaster.
- They get the plaster wet.
- A burning sensation in the heel.
- A lot of swelling or pain that doesn't settle when they raise their leg (elevation).
- The plaster cracks, splits or becomes very loose.

Please remember young children may not be able to tell you.

Aftercare advice

- **Elevating the limb:** After the plaster is put on, it is very important to keep the leg or arm raised (elevated) to help with swelling.

Try to elevate the leg using a stool with pillows, ideally a foot higher than the hip. Do this for about 20 to 30 minutes every 1 to 2 hours until the swelling goes down. Always remember to keep the heel free to prevent any extra pressure which may cause a sore.

If the arm is in plaster the use of a sling is recommended for the first couple of weeks.

- **Swelling and bruising** is normal and must be expected after the injury. This swelling can come and go during their recovery and may take 6 to 12 months to settle fully.

A lot of swelling can also cause pins and needles to the affected arm or leg. Again elevation can help with this.

- **Exercise:** Remember to exercise all joints that are not in plaster on the injured arm or leg to prevent stiffness and reduce swelling, especially the:
 - shoulders, fingers and elbows if the arm is in plaster.
 - knees, hips and toes if the leg is in plaster.

- **Pain relief:** Always give regular painkillers especially in the first couple of weeks. Paracetamol and ibuprofen are the recommended medication if they can take them. Take as directed on the packet.
- **Bathing and showering: Do not let the plaster cast get wet.** Leaflets advertising waterproof cast protectors are available from the department. Please ask a member of staff. We don't recommend using carrier bags or cling film to cover the cast, as these can split and leak.

General information

- A fracture, break and crack are all the same. The bone can be fractured in several ways usually in 2 or more pieces.
- Some fractures can be treated in strapping, some in a splint, boot or plaster cast and a few will need surgery.
- We will talk to you about surgery if this is needed.
- Healing starts on the first day of injury. Smaller bones heal quicker than longer bones.
- Age has an effect on the healing time. A child's bone heals much quicker than an adults.
- General health affects healing. It is advised to eat a healthy balanced diet which contains food rich in calcium such as milk, cheese and yogurt.
- The length of time it takes to heal will depend on the type of injury. In children, most arm injuries take 3 to 4 weeks, whilst most leg injuries take 4 to 6 weeks.

Will my child be able to return to school?

Most children will be able to return to school in cast. Please inform the school of their injury. Children should not take part in any sporting activities whilst in cast and for a number of weeks after. You will be advised in clinic when they can return to sporting activities.

Will further X-rays be needed?

Your child may not need any further X-rays when they return to clinic. Their healing can be assessed by examination.

What to expect after removal of a cast

- **Dry skin:** The skin will be dry so a good wash in the bath or shower and moisturiser will help.
- **Stiffness:** The joint will be very stiff but this should ease within the first week. Your child will not be referred for physiotherapy unless the consultant or nurse feels this is necessary. You will be given some exercises to do with your child at home.

- **Weakness:** The limb will feel very weak out of plaster. This is due to the loss of muscle while in plaster. Again this will improve as they build up the amount of activity they are doing.
- **Swelling:** The limb may swell sometimes during recovery and in some cases can take up to 6 months to settle completely. Keep it raised (elevated) if there is a lot of swelling.
- **Pins and needles / numbness:** This can come and go and will eventually settle down. If your child has had surgery then this can take a bit longer to settle.
- **Pain:** Due to the stiffness and weakness in the limb they may get some pain and discomfort. Regular paracetamol and ibuprofen will help to settle this.

How long will recovery take?

Please remember every patient and injury is different and therefore so will their recovery time.

The length of time it takes to heal will depend on the type of injury. In children, most arm injuries take 3 to 4 weeks, whilst most leg injuries take 4 to 6 weeks.

Generally as a guide if they have been in plaster for 4 to 6 weeks, then when the plaster comes off it will take at least another 4 to 6 weeks to get back to anywhere near the fitness level before the injury. If you have any problems please speak to your GP or call the NHS helpline on 111.

Contact details

If you have any problems, please contact The Professor Harper Trauma Clinic on 0116 258 5430

Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10.30am to 6pm

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk



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