

Surgery to your child's lower leg to lengthen the Achilles tendon

Children's Hospital

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Information for Patients

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What is Achilles tendon lengthening?

This is an operation that will make the Achilles tendon longer. The tendon connects your child's calf muscle to their heel.

Why does your child need a tendon lengthening?

There are a number of reasons why a shortened tendon may cause a problem. It can affect how a child walks and may cause some discomfort.

Surgery is normally recommended when the shortened tendon affects how a joint moves. This treatment can improve the how the joint works.

You may have already had a course of plaster casting to try and improve this . It is called serial casting.

The aim is to increase the length of the tendon and improve the range of motion of the joint.

Sometimes, the tendon may need to be lengthened again if your child grows quickly. The tendon growth may not keep up with the growth of the bone.

Pre-assessment

If surgery is needed, you will get a letter for a pre-assessment appointment. This is a chance to discuss any queries or concerns that you may have.

Your child will have to stop eating for a certain amount of time before their surgery. We will give instructions about this at your pre-assessment appointment.

This appointment may be at the hospital or by telephone.

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

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What happens on the day

We will give you information on where to attend on the day of surgery.

As a parent you can go to theatre reception. You can go with your child into the anaesthetic room.

You will then return to the ward until your child is ready to come back. The nurse will take a parent down to collect and bring you both back to the ward.

A parent is able to stay overnight. It is advisable to bring overnight items in hospital with you.

Your child will be off the ward for 1 to 2 hours.

The surgery is done under general anaesthetic (whilst your child is asleep).

The tendon is cut and divided, and then sewn into its new position.

We will put on a below knee cast.

Your child will wear a plaster cast for 6 to 8 weeks. This lets the tendon heal in its new position.

Your child will then go to recovery. A nurse will take a parent to collect your child, when recovery call the ward.

When your child comes back to the ward we will give them a drink and something to eat.

A physiotherapist will check how well they can walk with the cast on. They may be given crutches if needed.

If they are still sore on return, your nurse can give some more pain relief. The discomfort should settle over the next 48 hours.

What are the risks of this surgery?

Infection. This can be treated with oral antibiotics. If your child has a temperature after surgery and has discomfort from the wound area please contact the ward or the Specialist nurses.

Swelling. It is helpful to raise the leg to help reduce any swelling.

Plaster sore. Any sign of discomfort or rubbing of the plaster contact the Specialist nurse team.

Recurrence. There is a small risk that the tendon may become tight again

Nerve damage. The risk is low and is estimated at (2 in 100 patients)

What are the benefits of this surgery?

- Less discomfort
- Easier to wear shoes
- Better walking and balance



What to expect after surgery

As long as your child has recovered well after the anaesthetic you will be able to go home the same day. You should expect your child to have some discomfort, so please make sure you have some paracetamol and ibuprofen ready at home.

We will give you cast shoes. You need to use these when walking. Your consultant will give advice on whether your child can walk with the plaster cast. Physio will see you on the day and see if you need crutches

The cast is usually taken off at 6 weeks. The wound will be checked in an outpatient clinic.

Sometimes we give your child a splint to wear in their shoes after the cast has been taken off. This is usually for 3 to 6 months. These maybe for day or night time.

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Contact Details

Secretary 9am to 5pm	0116 258 5756
Specialist sister	07950 888 466
Deputy Sister	07977 957 248
Ward 19 (24 hours)	0116 258 5244/ 5534

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

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