

Fractured Tibia & Fibula in Children

Patient information - Orthopaedic & Paediatric Department



Fractured Tibia and Fibula

This is an injury to the two main bones in the lower leg. It often occurs due to a twisting injury or fall.

An above knee plaster is applied, with the knee slightly bent. Having the cast above the knee gives better support to the fracture (break) and stops the fracture from moving.

We often make a cut down the front of the cast to allow for any swelling. This is joined up with more plaster, either before the child goes home or at the time of the first follow-up visit to the Outpatients Department.

We sometimes admit a child to hospital so that we can elevate the leg and give adequate pain relief.

If the child is under 5 – 6 years, they often cannot manage crutches, so are issued with a wheelchair to allow them to get around. The staff and the physiotherapist will help the older child to mobilise with crutches. The Occupational Therapist may see you and arrange shower stool and other equipment or advice.

We can change the cast at a later time to a lighter type of cast once the swelling has gone down and it will be less painful.

It may be possible to allow walking on the cast when the doctor gives permission for this. At this time, the staff in Orthopaedic Outpatients will give you a shoe to strap on the end of the cast.

Panadol, Panadeine or Codeine are the most effective medications to take for pain relief. Take only as prescribed.

Read the Care of the Cast instructions carefully and once you are at home, you can ring the Orthopaedic Outpatient Department, if you have any concerns:

Telephone (03) 364 0800 and ask to speak to a Registered nurse.

Your child can go back to school once the pain has settled down and the limb no longer feels swollen. If they are using crutches, make sure they are confident with them. This is usually a week after the injury.

For more information about:

- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz

