

FRACTURE CARE

...after the procedure



A Guide to Your **Discharge**
and **Recovery** Process

When Bones Break . . .

Depending on the injury, bones can break in different ways.

All forms of treatment for broken bones follow one basic rule: *the broken pieces must be put back into position and prevented from moving out of place until they are healed.* This can be accomplished in a variety of different ways. Surgery is sometimes required to treat a fracture.

The type of treatment required depends on the severity of the break, whether it's "open" or "closed" and the specific bone involved.

Recovery . . .

Fractures take several weeks to several months to heal, depending on the extent of the injury and how well you follow your doctor's advice. Pain usually stops long before the fracture is solid enough to handle the stresses of normal activity.

Even after your cast or brace is removed, you may need to continue limiting your movement until the bone is solid enough for normal activity. Your doctor will instruct you when it is safe to resume normal activity.

Medications

- ♦ A prescription for pain medications will be given to you upon dismissal. Please use the medications for pain as needed, and as prescribed.

Activities

- ♦ Any specific limitations will be given to you after your surgery, depending on what your doctor decides best meets your needs.
- ♦ Pain is your body's way of telling you to rest an injured area. Limiting use of an injured body part helps it heal. So take it easy while you recover.
- ♦ If you smoke, stopping all nicotine products is strongly recommended to aid in fracture healing.

Swelling

- ♦ Use cold packs as much as possible after surgery to help relieve pain and reduce swelling. Apply 20-30 minutes each time.
- ♦ Elevate your injured body part higher than your heart. This reduces pain, swelling and throbbing.

Exercise:

- ♦ To help keep blood moving, wiggle any joints that are near (but outside of) your cast. These joints may include your toes, ankle, knee, elbow or fingers. Do these exercises frequently throughout the day.

Cast Care: If you have a cast or splint . . .

- ♦ Leave your splint or cast in place until your follow-up appointment.
- ♦ Keep your cast clean and dry. Wrap your cast in plastic wrap or plastic bags when showering or bathing. Use tape to secure the plastic so water does not leak in.
- ♦ Don't soak your cast in water—even if it's wrapped in plastic.
- ♦ Return to the hospital immediately if any of the following signs become evident:
 - 1) If pain becomes worse or doesn't get better with pain medications.
 - 2) If your fingers or toes become cold, numb, blue, gray or paralyzed.
 - 3) If your cast feels much too tight.
 - 4) If your cast becomes damaged or cracked, or has rough edges that hurt.

Incision Care: If you have an incision . . .

- ♦ If you have an incision covered with a dressing, you may remove the dressing 48 hours after surgery to clean your incision.
- ♦ Once you remove your dressing, you may rinse off your incision in the shower using clean soap and water.
- ♦ Clean the incisions daily using rubbing alcohol and cover with clean gauze dressing to protect it from rubbing on your clothing. Change the gauze dressing daily. **Do not use any ointments or creams on your incision.**
- ♦ Do not remove any steri-strips or sutures. Your doctor may remove them at your follow-up visit.
- ♦ **IF** you have pins protruding through the skin from surgery, clean them daily with rubbing alcohol to prevent infection.
- ♦ Despite the greatest care, any wound can become infected. Contact your physician immediately if:
 - ⇒ You run a fever
 - ⇒ Your incision becomes more painful rather than less painful as days go by
 - ⇒ Your incision becomes swollen, reddened, shows pus or red streaks

An appointment will be made for you prior to you leaving the hospital or you will be given instructions on how/when to schedule your follow-up appointment.

Thank you for choosing us!



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