Discharge advice: fifth metatarsal fracture

Information for patients

This sheet answers common questions about fifth metatarsal fractures. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

You have fractured a bone on the outer part of your foot. This part of the bone normally heals well and without problems.

The pain, tenderness and swelling you are experiencing in the foot should gradually settle over a period of several weeks.

During this time, you may find walking on the foot painful, and it may help to walk on the heel initially.

You will be provided with a support for the foot in the form of bandaging or a removable boot. If required, you will also be provided with crutches.

You may walk on the foot as much as pain allows. If you have been given a boot, you should gradually decrease its use after three to five weeks as the pain subsides.
Most injuries heal without any problems. However it may take several months for your symptoms to go away completely.

Occasionally the fracture may fail to heal and continue to be painful, even after several months. A surgical procedure may be needed at this stage to help heal the fracture.

If you are still experiencing significant symptoms after several months, please phone the fracture clinic helpline as listed below for further advice.

If you have any worries or concerns following discharge from hospital, please contact the virtual fracture clinic at the hospital you attended:

- **For Barnet Hospital:**
  - Phone on 020 8216 4445, 9am to midday, Monday-Friday, or leave a voicemail outside of these hours.
  - Email to RF-TR.barnethospitalvfc@nhs.net

- **For the Royal Free Hospital:**
  - Phone on 020 7472 6222, 9am to midday, Monday-Friday, or leave a voicemail outside of these hours.
  - Email to RF-TR.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net.

- Attend the emergency department or your local walk in centre outside of these hours.
Assessment in the virtual fracture clinic

Our fracture clinics have been redesigned to offer you a safe and effective process for assessing your broken bone(s).

Coming to a traditional fracture clinic can be unnecessary in many cases, and often difficult due to the pain and immobility you may experience.

It can be apparent at the time of your first fracture clinic appointment that the opinion of a specialist is required.

This can now be provided at our virtual fracture clinic. The ‘virtual’ clinic is the hub of the new assessment process.

Your x-ray(s) and initial assessment documentation will be reviewed in the virtual fracture clinic by the orthopaedic team within 72 hours of your attendance at the emergency department.

You will not need to attend the hospital for the assessment to take place.

A trained, experienced orthopaedic nurse or physiotherapist will contact you by telephone after this assessment to discuss your treatment or provide advice. They may also arrange a follow-up appointment at the most appropriate clinic.
Please ensure the hospital has your correct contact details prior to leaving the emergency department and that you are available to receive this call. If you are not available on the telephone a message will be left where possible.

Patients and their GPs will receive a letter outlining the assessment and outcome.

If you have any questions, please contact the virtual fracture clinic at the hospital you attended using the contact details above.

**Acknowledgment and references**

We would like to thank Glasgow Royal Infirmary for allowing us to reproduce their leaflet. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email RF-TR.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net.

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please ask a member of staff.

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Version number: 1

Approval date: May 2016

Review date: May 2018

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