

Virtual Fracture Clinic

Knee sprain (soft tissue injury to the knee)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

The Virtual Fracture Clinic (VFC) helps you recover from your injury without needing to come back to the hospital. This is called self-management.

Use the rehabilitation plan in this leaflet to guide your recovery.

Video about your injury and recovery

Watch this video to help your recovery. A doctor explains your injury and a physiotherapist shows how to do the exercises:

www.fracturecare.co.uk/care-plans/knee/soft-tissue-injury/

What is a knee sprain?

This is an injury to the soft tissue around your knee.

Healing

It can take 6 to 12 weeks for this injury to heal, depending on how serious the injury is.

Smoking slows down your healing. So, we advise that you stop smoking (including vaping) while your fracture heals. For more information, talk to your GP or go to nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

Pain and swelling

Your knee will be swollen. You will have some pain. Swelling is often worse at the end of the day. You can expect to have mild pain and swelling for 3 to 6 months. Reduce this by:

- taking pain medication
- raising your leg on a stool or cushions above the level of your hip (elevating)
- using ice or cold packs

Walking and your brace

You are allowed to put weight through your leg. You may find it easier to use crutches in the early stages.

Pace your activity until your pain and movement is better.

You may have been given a knee brace in A&E. This can be used to help manage your symptoms in the early stages. Try to stop using the brace as soon as you can.



Wear
your knee
brace as
instructed



Exercises

It is important to start exercises as soon as possible. Good rehabilitation will improve your recovery.

You can expect some discomfort at first. Do not continue if the pain gets worse and you cannot tolerate it.

Follow the instructions on the next pages.

Follow-up

Follow-up appointments are not usually needed for this injury. Patients usually recover well with self-management. But please contact our team if you:

- have significant pain or instability 3 weeks after your injury
- still need your brace and crutches 3 weeks after your injury

Caring for your injury

If provided, use your brace for comfort.

See a guide for fitting your brace: <https://vimeo.com/386673392>

Try to stop using the brace as soon as you can.

Remove your brace to wash, dress and do your exercises.

Using a cold pack will help with your pain and swelling.

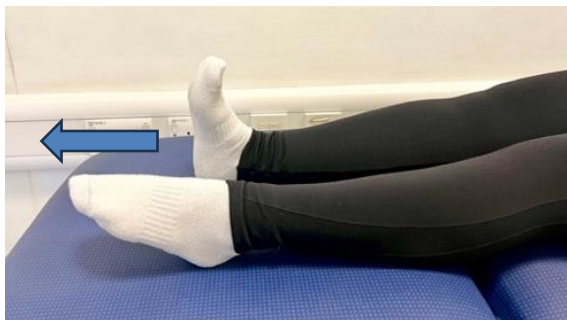
- use an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel
- put this on your knee for up to 15 minutes every few hours
- make sure the ice is not in direct contact with your skin

Try to rest your knee, especially in the first 24 to 72 hours. Raise your leg on a stool or cushions so that it is above the level of your hip. This will help to reduce your swelling.

Exercises:

It's important to move your ankle and foot as soon as you can. This promotes circulation and reduces the risk of developing a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis).

Do these exercises 3 to 4 times a day. Start straight away. Remember, you do not need to push into pain.



Point your foot up and down. Repeat 10 times.



Static quadriceps exercise

Rest with your leg supported and straight.

Gently tense the muscles in your thigh and try to straighten your knee further.

Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 7 to 10 times.



Inner range quads exercise:

Place a rolled-up towel or small pillow under your injured knee.

Tense your thigh muscle and try to straighten your knee.

Keep the back of your knee in contact with the towel/pillow.

Repeat 10 times.

If you can, try to hold your knee straight for 5 seconds.





Knee flexion and extension:

Sit or lie with your legs outstretched.

Bend and straighten your injured leg.
Go as far as you feel comfortable.

Repeat 7 to 10 times.



Seated knee flexion and extension:

When you can do the first knee-bending exercise easily, you can progress to this exercise. Sit on a chair or on the edge of your bed.

Bend and straighten your knee, lifting your heel off the floor.

Repeat this 10 times. If you can, try holding your knee straight for 5 seconds

Frequently Asked Questions

I am struggling with my brace. What do I do?

Please contact the VFC

I am struggling with my rehabilitation. What do I do?

If you have significant pain, swelling, instability or still need your crutches or brace after 3 weeks, please contact the VFC

When can I drive again?

You can return to driving when:

- you are no longer using your boot,
- you can walk comfortably and

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- you can perform an emergency stop pain free

Always test how well you can drive in a safe place first.

How can I get a 'fit note' for work?

Ask your GP for a 'fitness for work' statement. You can give this to your employer.

What do I do with my brace and crutches when I no longer need them?

Please return crutches to the fracture clinic or to A&E. They can be refurbished and reused. Your brace cannot be used again, so you do not need to return it.

Contact the VFC

We're here to help if you've got concerns about your injury, symptoms or exercises.

Call us on 077 7455 5354 (Monday to Friday between 09.00 and 17.00).

Or you can **email** imperial.vfc@nhs.net.

So, please contact us if you:

- have any concerns about your injury or symptoms
- cannot follow this rehabilitation plan
- are expecting an appointment letter and have not received it
- need help with your boot, brace or sling

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service, and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

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