

# Fracture Surgery



DR. EASTWOOD

## Postoperative Instructions for Surgery to Fix a Fracture

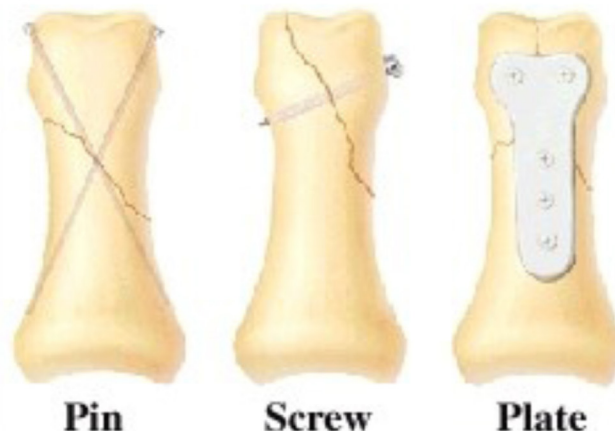
You had surgery to fix a fracture. The most common of this type surgery is called an open reduction, in which an incision is made in the skin allowing the surgeon to access the fracture site and fix it by placing screws and a plate on the bone. This is done to keep everything in place as the bone heals. Pins may also be used to keep the bones in place as they heal.

The most common types of fractures fixed with this type of surgery are an ankle or wrist fracture. However, fractures to the arm or leg are occasionally fixed in this way as well.

After the fracture is fixed, a splint or cast will be placed on the affected body part and will need to remain in place until your doctor takes it off. It is common for swelling to occur after surgery, which can cause the cast to feel tight and painful. Icing and elevation of the affected body part will help decrease the swelling and pain.

## Medications

- It is common to encounter more pain on the first or second day due to swelling.
- Using pain medication as directed will help to control the pain.
- It is important not to drink alcohol or drive while taking narcotic medications, such as Norco or Percocet.
- If you are taking Tylenol, don't take narcotics, such as Norco or Percocet, as these medications contain Tylenol.



## Wound Care

- Keep dressing clean, dry and intact.
- Call your doctor if you have a fever over 100.4°F.
- Call your doctor if you notice pus or red streaks coming from the wound.
- Call your doctor if you notice increased redness or swelling around the wound.
- Call your doctor if you notice increasing bleeding from the wound.

*If you have any problems or questions,  
please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).*

*Answering service for after hours.*

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## Activity

- Elevation of the affected body part is very important after surgery to prevent fluid from pooling, which can cause swelling and pain.
- You may also apply ice to the affected area over the splint or cast. Apply the ice for 20-40 minutes and then remove the ice for 20-40 minutes several times a day.
- To help keep blood circulating and prevent blood clots, wiggle your fingers or toes on the affected limb 10 times an hour. If you are able, you may pump your fingers into a fist 10 times an hour.
- If you notice that the cast or splint is getting very tight and painful, immediately elevate the affected body part and place ice on it as well. If it doesn't get better within 15 to 20 minutes despite ice and elevation, call your doctor.
- If you notice that the fingers or toes on the affected side become pale and cold, call your doctor right away.
- If you had surgery on your leg, you won't be able to put your weight on that leg. Crutches can be used to help you get around while your leg heals. Do not put any weight on your leg unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- If you had surgery on your arm, you may use those fingers for light activities, such as eating, dressing and personal hygiene unless your doctor tells you otherwise. No heavy lifting, pushing or pulling.
- Your surgical site is covered with a splint or cast. The splint or cast needs to remain dry and intact until your postoperative appointment with your doctor unless otherwise instructed.
- When taking a shower, you will need to wrap the cast or splint in a large plastic bag and then securely tape it in place so water will not get into the bag.
- If your cast or splint gets a little wet or damp, you may use a hair dryer on low setting and sweep the hair dryer back and forth across the cast or splint to help it dry. If your cast or splint gets really wet, call your doctor.
- The skin that is inside the cast or splint may start to itch. Do not stick anything inside your cast or splint as it may cause the stitches to break or loosen up, causing bleeding. You might also scratch your skin, which could become infected.

## For a Leg Cast:



## For an Arm Cast:



## Preventing Blood Clots

- Take one baby aspirin (81mg) twice a day until the sutures are removed. Do not take if you have an allergy or are on a blood thinner.
- Walking around will help the blood circulate and prevent blood clots.
- While sitting or lying down, move your feet in a circle or pump your feet up and down 10-30 times an hour.
- If you notice redness, tenderness or swelling in your calf muscles, call your doctor right away.

## Diet

- Pain medications can cause constipation.
- To help prevent constipation, you can try a high-fiber diet with lots of fluids.