

## Return to sport

Your child can return to sports when there is full strength in the ankle. You can test ankle strength by asking your child to hop on the injured leg. Before returning to competitive sport, you may want to see a doctor or physiotherapist who knows about athletic and sport-related injuries. Most children are doing all their normal sports and play by three months after the injury.

## Problems

If your child has sudden new pain, swelling or tingling in their injured area, that would be unusual. If this happens, please come back to the children's emergency department at any time.

If you have any other problems, for example, the pain does not go away after taking simple pain medicines, please come back to the emergency department.

To ensure your child's injury is being treated correctly, their x-rays are looked at by specialist x-ray doctors. If we have any concerns we will contact you directly, and may ask you to come back to hospital.

## How to find us

For information on directions, public transport and parking visit [www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk) and look at 'Getting to King's'.

## Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite

you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

## Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is in the main hospital foyer at PRUH and they would be happy to advise you.

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital,  
Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND  
Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: [kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net).**

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# Minor injuries of the metatarsal (foot)

Information for patients and parents/carers – Princess Royal University Hospital

This leaflet explains what to do if you/your child has been diagnosed with a minor injury of the foot. It explains the symptoms, what you can do and what you can expect.

## Introduction

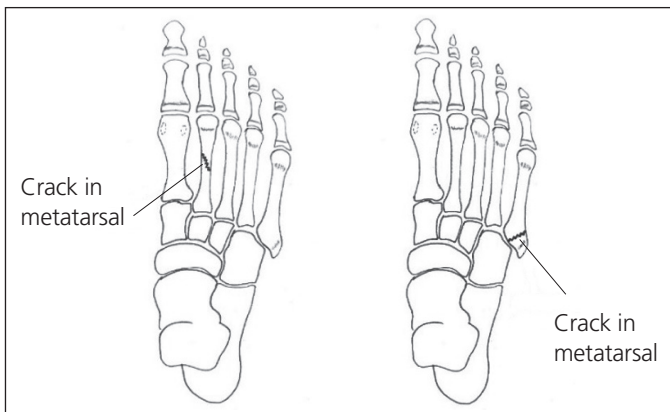
Your child has been seen and assessed by one of the doctors or nurse practitioners who believes it is safe for you to take your child home. This leaflet has been written by the doctors and nurses working in the children's emergency department to act as a guide and is to remind you of some of the things you need to know in order to look after your child in the future. We hope this will be helpful to you. Please read it carefully.

## What is a metatarsal fracture?

The metatarsals are the bones in the foot that attach the toes to the ankle. A fracture is the same as a cracked or broken bone.

Hearing us say your child has a 'fracture' sounds serious. The good news is, your child has a minor injury - the bones are stable and held in the right place, no procedures are needed and your child will make a full recovery.

Take a look at the diagrams below. They show examples of the kind of injury your child has.



## What to expect

- Your child will have some pain. It should be mild and settle over the next few days.

- It may take 2-6 weeks for the bone to fully heal. Feel free to remove the boot and/or stop using crutches any time your child says they feel little pain when walking.
- There may be swelling, but not always. Any swelling should improve in the first week but may take much longer to return to normal.

You can use paracetamol or ibuprofen to help your child feel more comfortable. Please always give medication as indicated on the label.

## Treatment

These injuries heal well with time. They do not need a cast or need to visit a bone specialist. Your child will be given a set of crutches and a rigid boot that can support the injured foot while it is healing.

- **Gentle movement** and a little body-weight can be taken while wearing the boot. This works better than keeping it completely still. Moving the foot gently, even if it causes a little discomfort, will not cause more damage.
- **Keep the foot up** on a pillow as much as possible. This will reduce swelling.
- Use **paracetamol** as a painkiller.

Then after the first 3-5 days when the pain and swelling have improved...

- Improve **movement** by flexing the ankle up and down. Try tracing circles with the big toe in the air. Do this every couple of hours.
- Then improve **balance** by standing on one leg (the injured side)
- Then improve **strength** by taking a little more

weight through the leg each day. Then start walking up and down stairs. Most children want to get back to play or sport as soon as possible!

- A **positive attitude** is important! Fear and sadness are barriers to a speedy recovery.
- Return to **'no-impact' exercise** gradually once the pain has improved.

## Virtual Fracture Clinic

Your child's injury will heal up all on its own. To ensure safety, we ask our team in the 'Virtual Fracture Clinic' to review all cases nonetheless. Details of your child's injury and the x-ray images will be reviewed by our orthopaedic (bone specialist) and physiotherapy teams. Normally they will not need to call you. You can simply continue to follow the Emergency Department (ED) instructions and advice. If your child's injury does not improve as outlined by the ED instructions, please contact the virtual fracture clinic on the details below.

Occasionally, the team may need to contact you by phone to discuss your child's injury further. The doctors in ED will let you know if you should expect a follow up phone call. This call will be a withheld number and be between **9am – 4pm**, Monday – Friday.

## PLEASE ENSURE WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT CONTACT DETAILS BEFORE YOU GO HOME.

If you have been told to expect a call and have not been contacted within three working days of your child's visit, please phone **01689 865136** between 9am – 4pm, Monday - Friday.  
Email: [kch-tr.pruhfracturecareteam@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.pruhfracturecareteam@nhs.net)