

Patella fracture

Fracture care team [Patient information](#)

This is a follow-up to your recent phone call with the fracture care team. Your case has been reviewed by an orthopaedic consultant (bone specialist) and fracture care physiotherapist.

**You have a fracture of your patella (kneecap).
The fracture is undisplaced (not out of place).**

Healing: This injury will take 6-12 weeks to heal.

Pain and swelling: Your knee may be swollen. Resting and raising the leg will help. Take pain killers as prescribed.

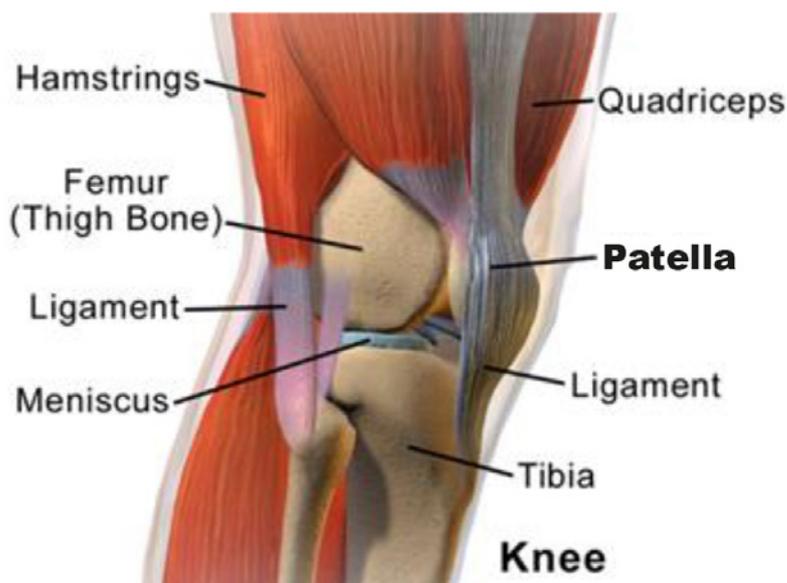
Using your leg: You may walk on your leg as comfort allows. Using crutches for the first three weeks will help your balance. You must wear the brace fitted by the Emergency Department, which should be locked at 0 degrees (straight). You can only remove the splint to wash your leg daily. You will have been referred for physiotherapy. They can change the range of movement in the brace when needed.

Follow up: We do not normally follow up these undisplaced fractures in clinic. If you are not progressing as expected, or your physiotherapist is concerned, we would be happy to review you in fracture clinic.

If you are worried about following this rehabilitation plan, please contact us for advice.

If you have pain other than at the site of the injury or surrounding area, please get in touch. Contact details are at the bottom of this leaflet.

Area of your injury



Please follow the management plan below

What to expect:

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Wear the brace fitted by the Emergency Department for six weeks.✓ You may remove it for personal hygiene and to apply a cold pack.✓ The splint can be worn under or over your clothes, whichever is most comfortable.✓ You are allowed to put weight through the leg. Use crutches for balance.
2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You or your physio can increase the amount the brace allows you to move as described below. See 'fitting the range of movement brace' below (weeks 3 to 6)✓ You should continue to wear your brace. You may remove it for the exercises you will be advised to do by your physiotherapist.
6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You may now remove the brace completely if you have good strength in your knee.✓ You should be walking without crutches and achieving good range of movement under the guidance of your physio.

Advice for a new injury:

Cold packs:

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief and help reduce swelling. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes. Do this every few hours. Make sure the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

Rest and elevation:

Try to rest the knee for the first 24-72 hours. This will let the early stage of healing begin. Raise your knee above the level of your hips to reduce swelling. You can use pillows or a stool to keep your foot up.

Early movement and exercise:

Early movement of the ankle and foot is important to promote circulation. This reduces the risk of getting a DVT (blood clot). Follow the exercises below without causing too much pain. These exercises will help the healing process. Early weight bearing (putting weight through your injured leg) helps healing. Try to walk as normally as possible as this will help with your recovery and reduce the risk of getting a DVT.

DVT - what to look out for:

A DVT (deep vein thrombosis) is when a blood clot forms in one of the deep veins of the body, usually in the lower leg.

It can happen when the blood flow slows down. This can happen with long periods of inactivity. Being in a splint which stops you moving can increase this risk.

Keeping mobile and doing the exercises below can help to reduce the risk. So can drinking plenty of water. If you have been assessed as being at high risk of getting a DVT, you may have been prescribed medication (injections) to prevent a DVT.

If you notice that your calf becomes more painful, red, swollen and warm to the touch, please seek immediate medical attention.

Smoking advice:

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you think about this information in relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help give you the best recovery.

For advice on stopping smoking and local support go to: www.livewell Dorset.co.uk/stop-smoking or discuss this with your GP.

Return to driving

You may return to driving when you are able to fully control the vehicle. This includes being able to safely do an emergency stop. You must not drive in the brace you have been given. It may take a few weeks before you feel safe. This varies from person to person.

Fitting the range of movement brace



The brace will be set at 0° degrees for two weeks..

The range of movement will then be increased in the following stages:

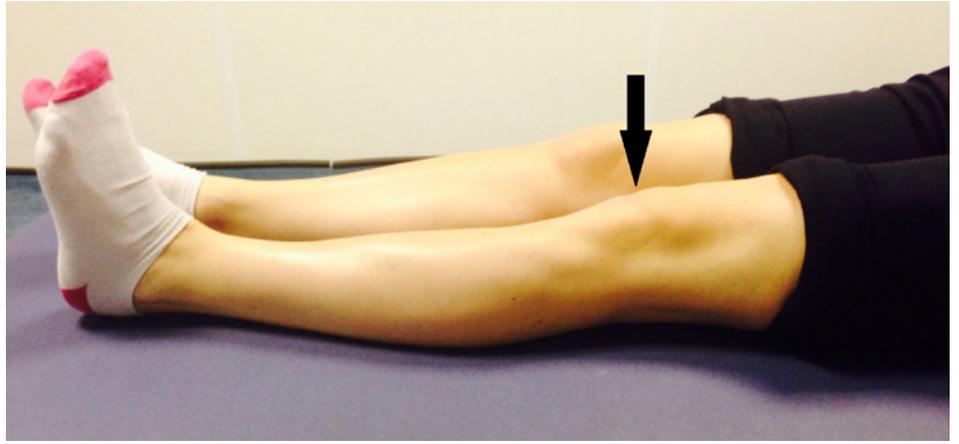
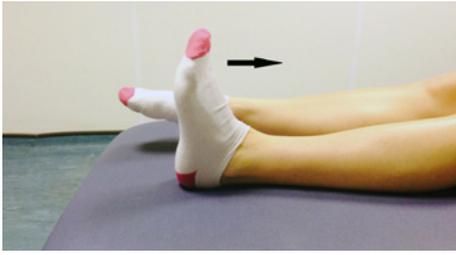
- 0-45° for week 3
- 0-60° for week 4
- 0-75° for week 5
- 0-90° for week 6

The brace can then be removed completely. Up until this time it should be worn at all times, other than for washing and exercises.

Exercises

These exercises can be started immediately.

Initial exercise to do 3 times a day (with or without the splint).



1. Point your foot up and down. Repeat 10 times.
2. With the leg straight and supported, gently tense your thigh muscle and try to straighten your knee further. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 7-10 times.
3. With your knee tense, lift your leg off the bed about 2 inches and hold for 10 seconds.
4. Gently bend and straighten your knee within the limits of the range of movement brace, as stated above.

These exercises should be repeated 3-4 times per day.

Further exercises will be given to you by your physiotherapist.

Contact details

Please contact **0300 019 2802**

(Answer machine monitored Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm)

Or e-mail: **uhd.fracturecare@nhs.net**

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