



# Base of fifth metatarsal fracture

## Information for patients

### What is a base of fifth metatarsal fracture?



You have a fractured bone on the outer part of your foot. The long bones in your foot are called metatarsals. They are numbered from one to five. This fracture is at the base of the fifth metatarsal, which is where the name comes from – see the image provided. The break has occurred in a part of the bone that normally heals without a problem, so you won't need to have a plaster cast.

### Swelling and pain

The pain, tenderness and swelling you are experiencing should gradually settle over a period of several weeks. You may find it difficult to walk during this time due to the pain, so you might find it easier to put weight through your heel to start with.

### Recommended treatment

You will be provided with a stiff soled shoe to support your foot while the bone is healing. Alternatively you may be able to wear your own shoe, if it has good support. If necessary, you will also be given crutches.

You can walk on your injured foot as much as your pain allows. You should gradually stop using the supportive shoe over three to five weeks, as your pain settles.

### Recovery time

Most base of fifth metatarsal injuries heal without any problems. However, it may take several months for your symptoms to settle completely.

### Management of your injury

#### Painkillers

Take regular painkillers to help you move more easily and gently exercise your injured limb. Paracetamol is ideal. Please read and follow the dosage instructions on the packet carefully. If paracetamol does not help, you may need a stronger painkiller. If you require stronger pain relief, please contact your own GP for a prescription.

#### Rest

Rest your injured limb for the next 24 to 48 hours, with your foot elevated. Continue to gently move your injured ankle and foot, to prevent stiffness.

## Ice

You can apply ice to your foot for up to 20 minutes every two hours, for the first 24 to 48 hours. A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel is ideal. Do not apply ice directly to your skin, as this may cause a cold burn.

## Elevation

Your leg should be elevated while resting, to help reduce the swelling. This means that your foot should be at a higher level than your hip. Avoid having long periods of time when your leg is not rested.

## Possible complications

Occasionally the fracture may fail to heal and will continue to be painful, even after several months. If this happens, you may need an operation to help heal the fracture.

If you are still experiencing significant symptoms after twelve weeks, please contact your own **GP** for a review and if necessary a referral to the Orthopaedic Outpatient Department, or contact the Orthopaedic Outpatient Clinic on 6457 7951 // 6457 1189.

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