

Emergency Department

# Base of 5<sup>th</sup> metatarsal fracture

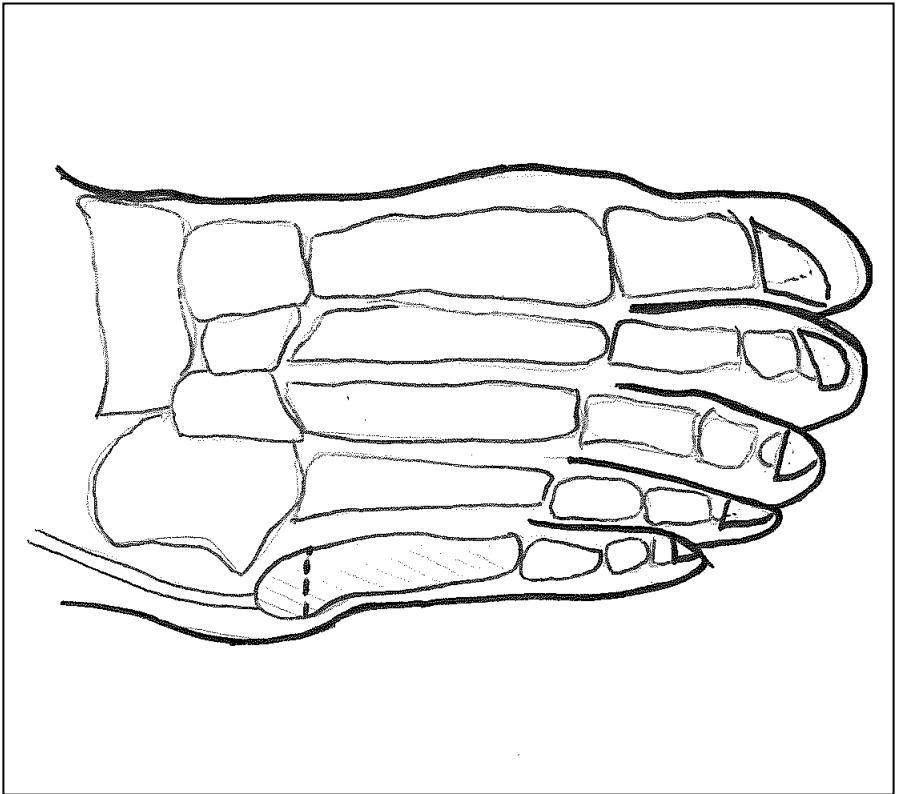
Information for patients





## What a base of 5th metatarsal fracture?

You have a fractured bone on the outer part of your foot. The the long bones in your foot are called metatarsals. They are numbered from 1 to 5. This fracture is at the base of the 5th metatarsal, which is where the name comes from. 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 5th metatarsal injuries heal without any problems. However, it may take several months for your symptoms to settle completely.

## 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 eight weeks, please contact the New Patient Clinic for an appointment (contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

## Management of your injury

### **Painkillers**

Take regular painkillers, to help you move more easily and gently exercise your injured limb. Paracetamol is ideal. If paracetamol does not help, you may need a stronger painkiller, such as codeine. Codeine is only available on prescription; however you can buy a combination of paracetamol with codeine over the counter of any pharmacy. Please speak to the pharmacist for extra advice.

Please read and follow the dosage instructions on the packet carefully. If you require a stronger pain relief, please contact your own GP for a prescription.

### **Rest**

Rest your injured limb for the next 24 - 48 hours, with your foot elevated (raised up). 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 - 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 heart. Avoid having long periods of time when your leg is not rested.

## Feedback

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. If you have any comments, concerns, or complaints about your experience of our service, please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service.

### **John Radcliffe Hospital**

PALS Office  
Level 2, Main entrance  
John Radcliffe Hospital  
Headley Way  
Headington  
Oxford OX3 9DU

Tel: 01865 221 473

Email: [PALS@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@ouh.nhs.uk)

### **Horton General Hospital**

PALS Office  
Horton General Hospital  
Oxford Road  
Banbury, OX16 9AL

Tel: 01295 229 259

Email: [PALS@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@ouh.nhs.uk)

## How to contact us

If you continue to have pain eight weeks after your injury, despite taking regular painkillers and caring for your injury as advised, or if at any point you are worried your injury is not healing, please contact the New Patient Clinic for an appointment.

New Patient (Fracture) Clinic at:

### **John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford**

Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

Saturday and Sunday 9.00am to 11.00am

Tel: **01865 220 217**

OR

### **Horton General Hospital, Banbury**

Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 11.00am

Tel: **01295 229 606**

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **[PALS@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@ouh.nhs.uk)**

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