

Advice for using crutches safely

After your operation or procedure, it may be necessary for you to use crutches for a while. Depending on your injury, you may or may not be allowed to bear weight on your injured leg.

How do I use crutches to stand?

- Hold both crutches into one hand
- Push up from a stable chair, bring hips forward to edge of chair and have crutches nearby ready to use
- Once standing, transfer one crutch into the other hand
- Put the crutches in front of you and get your balance.

How do I use crutches to sit?

- Make sure the chair is immediately behind you, by feeling for the edge of the chair against the back of your knees
- Put both crutches in one hand
- Hold the chair arm with the other hand
- Place you injured leg further forward than your other leg, sit down gently.

How do I use crutches to walk?

If you are advised that you are allowed to put weight on your injured leg:

- Put both crutches forward together
- Put your injured leg one step forward in between your crutches
- Take your weight onto your hands and arms and step through with your good leg.

If you are advised you are **not** allowed to put weight on your injured leg:

- Put both crutches forward together
- Keep your injured leg off the ground and in front of you, with knee flexed
- Take your weight onto your hands and arms
- Bring your good leg forward, just past the crutches to help keep your balance
- You must not lean on the crutches through your armpit as this may cause nerve damage.

Continued overleaf...

Originator: Walk-in Centre

Exercises

To prevent swelling when you are not up and about:

- Sit with your injured leg elevated on a stool, so that your foot is higher than your hip. Support your knee to prevent a strain
- To improve circulation, curl and stretch your toes, circle ankle if able and clench thigh muscle for five minutes every hour
- If your leg is not in a plaster cast you may be given more active exercises to promote the healing of your injury. Do these exercises as instructed.

General Safety

- Wear flat supportive shoes with a full shoe
- Use a chair with a high seat and arms to help you sit and stand up with ease
- Remove obstacles in your home such as loose rugs
- Avoid wet floors
- Ensure adequate lighting
- Beware of door hazards including uneven surfaces, wet leaves and ice
- Regularly inspect the crutches for wear, eg bent or damaged tubes or loose rivets, ensure that pin adjustment holes used to alter crutch length are not worn
- Check that the rubber ends are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones
- If you have a problem with the crutches, contact the Minor Injuries Unit at Victoria Central Health Centre.

When no longer needed please return the crutches to the Minor Injuries Unit at Victoria Central Health Centre.