

Broken Foot: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

A broken foot, or foot fracture, is a break in one or more of the bones in your foot. It may happen because of a sports injury, a fall, or other accident. A compound, or open, fracture occurs when a bone breaks through the skin. A break that does not poke through the skin is a closed fracture. Your treatment depends on the location and type of break in your foot.

You may need a splint, a cast, or an orthopedic shoe. Certain kinds of injuries may need surgery at some time. Whatever your treatment, you can ease symptoms and help your foot heal with care at home. You may need 6 to 8 weeks or more to fully heal.

You heal best when you take good care of yourself. Eat a variety of healthy foods, and don't smoke.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Be safe with medicines. Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Leave the splint on until your follow-up appointment. Do not put any weight on the injured foot. If you were given crutches, use them as directed.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your foot for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the next 3 days (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.

- Prop up the sore foot on a pillow anytime you sit or lie down during the next 3 days. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.
- Follow the cast care instructions your doctor gives you. If you have a splint, do not take it off unless your doctor tells you to.

Cast and splint care

- If you have a removable splint, ask your doctor if it is okay to remove it to bathe. Your doctor may want you to keep it on as much as possible.
- Keep your plaster splint covered by taping a sheet of plastic around it when you bathe. Water under the plaster can cause your skin to itch and hurt.
- Never cut your splint.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have chest pain, are short of breath, or you cough up blood.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse pain.
- Your foot is cool or pale or changes color.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in your toes.
- Your cast or splint feels too tight.
- You have signs of a blood clot in your leg (called a deep vein thrombosis), such as:
 - Pain in your calf, back of the knee, thigh, or groin.
 - Redness or swelling in your leg.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have a problem with your splint or cast.
- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

Enter **J636** in the search box to learn more about "**Broken Foot: Care Instructions**".

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