Emergency department factsheets

General

### Why use crutches

Crutches can help you recover from leg injuries, such as a fracture, surgery, sprain or strain. By reducing the amount of weight placed on an affected leg, injuries can heal quicker.

### When to use crutches

Your health care professional will advise you when it is appropriate to use crutches and ensure your crutches are fitted and used correctly.

The amount of weight to put on an affected leg depends on your injury. Be guided by your health care professional.

### How long do I need crutches for?

This depends on your injury and how quickly you recover. It is important to follow medical advice and to attend all follow-up appointments.

### How to use crutches

It is important that your crutches fit properly.

When standing with arms loosely by your side, each crutch should be two finger widths below the armpit.

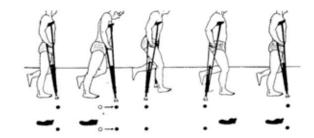
The heel of your hand should rest on the handpiece, while keeping your wrist and elbow bent slightly.

# Safety tips

- Ensure screws are fully tightened and rubber stoppers are not worn through.
- Make sure any weight goes through your hands, not your armpits.
- Wear supportive, non-slip shoes, such as runners.
- Do not walk in socks as they are too slippery.
- Take your time, especially when using stairs.
- Crutches should be kept close to your feet.
  Do not allow the crutches to move too far out to the side.

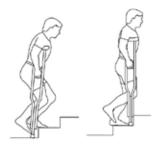
# Walking pattern

- 1. Put your crutches out in front, push all your weight down through your hands, then hop through with the good leg.
- 2. Always keep a triangle between your good leg and the crutches to ensure good balance.
- 3. Do not pivot on your good foot. Hop around to change direction.



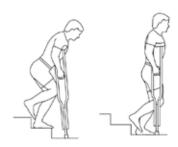
# Going up stairs

When going up stairs put your good foot up first and then push yourself up. Bring your bad leg and crutches up next.



# Going down stairs

When going down stairs put your crutches down and bad leg out first. Do not put weight on your bad leg if you are not allowed to. Make sure you are balanced, then take the weight down through your crutches and step down with your good leg.





# Using crutches

General

### Sitting in a chair

- · Get close enough so the back of your legs are touching the chair.
- Hold both crutches by the handles using the opposite side to your affected leg.
- · Reach back with your other arm and lower yourself into the chair.

# Getting up from a chair

- Hold both crutches by the handles using the opposite hand to your affected leg.
- Push yourself up using the hand grips and the chair arms.
- Once standing and balanced, arrange crutches under each arm.

### Follow-up

It is important that you follow instructions and attend all follow-up appointments.

Notes:

### Seeking help



In a medical emergency go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance (dial 000).



For other medical problems see your local doctor or health care professional.



For health advice from a Registered Nurse you can call NURSE-ON-CALL 24 hours a day on 1300 60 60 24 for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria.\*

**NURSE-ON-CALL** provides access to interpreting services for callers not confident with English. Call 1300 60 60 24.

\*Calls from mobile calls may be charged at a higher rate

## Want to know more?

- Ask your local doctor or health care professional.
- Visit the Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please phone 9096 0578 or email edfactsheets@health.vic.gov.au















