
Virtual Fracture Clinic

Dislocated kneecap (patella dislocation)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

The Virtual Fracture Clinic (VFC) helps you recover from your injury without needing to come back to the hospital. This is called self-management.

Use the rehabilitation plan in this leaflet to guide your recovery.

Video about your injury and recovery

Watch this video to help your recovery. A doctor explains your injury and a physiotherapist shows how to do the exercises:

www.fracturecare.co.uk/care-plans/knee/patella-dislocation/

What is a patella dislocation?

This is when your kneecap bone (patella) moves out of its joint (dislocated). It may have realigned by itself or have been put back in place in the Emergency Department.

What symptoms can I expect?

Your knee will be swollen. You will have some pain. Swelling is often worse at the end of the day.

You can help reduce pain and swelling by:

- taking pain medication
- raising your leg on a stool or cushions above the level of your hip (elevating)
- using ice or cold packs

You can expect to have mild pain and swelling for 3 to 6 months.

How long will it take to heal?

It can take approximately 6 weeks for this injury to heal.

Smoking slows down your healing. So, we advise that you stop smoking (including vaping) while your fracture heals. For more information, talk to your GP or go to nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

Walking and your brace

The knee brace must be worn day and night.

- only take it off to wash or use a cold pack.
- keep your knee straight and replace the brace when you are finished

You are allowed to put weight through your leg.

You may find it easier to use crutches in the early stages.

Exercises

It is important to start exercises as soon as possible. Good rehabilitation will improve your recovery.

You can expect some discomfort at first. Do not continue if the pain gets worse and you cannot tolerate it. Follow the instructions on the next pages.

Follow up

You will see a knee specialist approximately 2 weeks after your injury. They will tell you about the next stage of your rehabilitation.

If you have not received your appointment letter within 1 week, please contact us.

Caring for your injury

Remember to wear your brace

- the specialist will tell you when you do not need the brace
- see a video guide for fitting your brace: <https://vimeo.com/386673392>



Wear
your knee
brace day
and night



Using a cold pack will help with your pain and swelling.

- use an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel
- put this on your knee for up to 15 minutes every few hours
- make sure the ice is not in direct contact with your skin

Try to rest your knee, especially in the first 24 to 72 hours. Raise your leg on a stool or cushions so that it is above the level of your hip. This will help to reduce your swelling.

Exercises

It's important to move your ankle and foot as soon as you can. This promotes circulation and reduces the risk of developing a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis).

Do these exercises 3 to 4 times a day. Start straight away, working within your pain levels.



Point your foot up and down. Repeat 10 times.



Static quadriceps exercise

Rest with your leg supported and straight.

Gently tense the muscles in your thigh and try to straighten your knee further.

Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 7 to 10 times.

Frequently asked questions

It's hard for me to walk in my brace. What do I do?

For more advice, contact the VFC.

I am diabetic. Is it ok for me to wear a brace?

If you are diabetic, please contact us to discuss your brace. This is particularly important if you have problems with your skin or sensation. We may provide you with a specialist diabetic boot.

When can I drive again?

You can return to driving when:

- you are no longer using your brace
- you can walk comfortably and
- you can perform an emergency stop pain free

Always test how well you can drive in a safe place first.

How can I get a 'fit note' for work?

Ask your GP for a 'fitness for work' statement. You can give this to your employer.

What do I do with my brace when I no longer need it?

Your brace cannot be used again, so you do not need to return it.

Contact the VFC

We're here to help if you've got concerns about your injury, symptoms or exercises.

Call us on **077 7455 5354** (Monday to Friday between 09.00 and 17.00).

Or you can **email** imperial.vfc@nhs.net.

So, please contact us if you:

- have any concerns about your injury or symptoms
- cannot follow this rehabilitation plan
- are expecting an appointment letter and have not received it
- need help with your boot, brace or sling

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service. Staff will be happy to answer your questions. So, if you have **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please talk to a member of staff. Or you can contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**). Call **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday) or email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net

The PALS team will listen to your concerns and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Or, to complain, contact our complaints department:

Call **020 3312 1337 / 1349** or email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Or write to: Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

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