

# Simple ankle fracture

## What's happened to my child's ankle?

Your child has broken the bone in their ankle and has what is known as a simple ankle fracture (a fracture and a break are the same thing). This type of fracture is very stable and takes three to four weeks to heal. The good news is this injury doesn't cause long-term problems.

## Why don't they get a plaster cast?

Lots of research has shown that this injury will heal just as well in a Controlled Ankle Movement (CAM) boot. This avoids the problems associated with going into plaster and means you can take it off to wash. All x-rays will be reviewed by a senior doctor to ensure the appropriate treatment has been given. If it is not a simple ankle fracture they will call you.

## How long do I wear the splint?

The CAM boot needs to be worn for three to four weeks and it can come off for showering and sleeping. However, your child can wear the boot during the night if it is more comfortable.

Your child can walk in the CAM boot, but may need crutches for the first few days if it is painful. The sole of the CAM boot is slightly curved and takes a bit of time to get used to.

It is recommended to wear a shoe on the other foot while walking in the CAM boot. After three to four weeks your child can stop wearing the CAM boot.

## Follow up?

You do not need to come back to the fracture clinic at PMH. Some fractures will need to be followed up by your GP in seven to 10 days. The Emergency Department staff will let you know if you need to follow up with your GP and provide you with a letter.

## My child won't keep the CAM boot on – what should I do?

If you have a small child who simply won't keep it on, the ankle will have to go into plaster instead. Please come back to the Emergency Department and we will put one on.

## When can my child play sport?

Avoid all sports (including swimming) while using the CAM boot. Once a child has finished wearing the CAM boot, they should avoid physical education, sports and rough play for



another three to four weeks for example, a total of six to eight weeks off sport after the injury.

### Is there anything to look out for?

Your child may need painkillers for the first few days such as paracetamol, or ibuprofen. There may also be some swelling, which should settle after a few days.

If your child gets any 'pins and needles' in the foot you should loosen the CAM boot. If this doesn't help, call the Emergency Department for further advice.

It is normal for the ankle to hurt for a few days after the CAM boot comes off. This is to be expected and should settle.

If you have any concerns about the injury or CAM boot contact your GP.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Child and Adolescent Health Service

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.**

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