

# **Information for patients and carers**

## **Weber 'A' Ankle Fractures**

## What is my injury?

A Weber 'A' Ankle Fracture refers to a broken bone (fibula) in your ankle.

## How common are ankle fractures?

A Weber A Ankle Fracture is a common injury which usually occurs when you “go over” on your ankle. This stretches the ligaments on the outside of the ankle joint and pulls off a fragment of bone.

## What symptoms do ankle fractures cause?

Symptoms commonly include pain, swelling, bruising and initially difficulty weight bearing. The pain experienced can be severe.

## How should I be looking after my ankle?

The initial treatment after this type of injury aims to settle the pain and swelling by resting, applying ice packs, taking regular painkillers and elevating the ankle.

It is important to remember that early weight bearing aids a quicker recovery. It is also important to keep the ankle moving to prevent stiffness.

If you smoke, you are advised to stop as smoking can slow down bone healing.

## What do I do if I have been provided with a “boot” to wear?

Sometimes A&E and minor injuries departments will give a “walker boot” to people with ankle fractures. This may initially help with the pain, but it is important to not become reliant on the boot as it will make the ankle weaker and stiffer in the longer term.

The boot should be removed at regular intervals and discarded as soon as it is no longer helping. Keep yourself hydrated and mobile as reduced mobility from ankle fractures can increase the risk of a blood clot in the leg or chest. Symptoms such as leg pain or swelling, shortness of breath, coughing up blood, chest pain or feeling faint require you to attend A&E urgently.

## Do I need physiotherapy?

Most patients benefit from physiotherapy advice to work on range of movement exercises and to build up strength and proprioception (knowing where your ankle is positioned without having to look at it). In addition to recovery after a fracture, these exercises also help to minimise recurrent injuries occurring. It is important you do these exercises that have been advised. You have been referred to physiotherapy for their expert input.

## How quickly will things improve?

The vast majority of these injuries will settle, and the bone heals within 6-8 weeks. Occasionally some people have ongoing problems, these can include ongoing pain particularly if the fracture has not healed.

It is important that if you have ongoing problems you contact us as you may require further investigations.

## Do I need further x-rays?

The overwhelming number of these fractures heal without problem. Sometimes the healing is not with bone but with fibrous tissue (scar tissue). This means that on an x-ray, it may look like the fracture line is still present but it has actually healed with fibrous tissue that isn't visible on x-ray. For this reason, x-rays are usually unhelpful in the long-term management of these injuries.

# When can I get back to normal activities?

In terms of return to sport, we would generally recommend you are pain free before undertaking vigorous physical activity. This is usually 6 – 8 weeks but can be longer.

Return to work should be guided by your symptom level and what your job involves, for example, manual workers may need more time off work than administration workers due to the nature of their work.

In terms of driving, it is your responsibility to ensure you are fit to drive and can fully control your car before you return to driving. The DVLA website has further information regards this.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact the Fracture clinic on **01772 522878**.

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

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**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

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