

# Information for patients and carers

## Ankle fracture (Stable Weber B type)



## What is my injury?

Ankle fracture (broken bone in the ankle). Weber B refers to the location of the fracture in your fibula (outside bone of your ankle) and stable means it does not need surgery.

## How common are ankle fractures?

A Weber B ankle fracture is a common injury which usually occurs when you “go over” on your ankle. This fractures the bone on the outside of the ankle joint.

## What symptoms do ankle fractures cause?

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

## How should I be looking after my ankle?

The initial treatment in the first few days after this type of injury aims to settle down 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?

Most patients with a stable Weber B ankle fracture will be provided with a “walker boot”. This may help initially with the pain, but it is important to

not become reliant on this boot as this will make the ankle weaker and stiffer in the longer term. You can remove the boot for washing and you do not need to sleep in the boot unless you wish to.

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 should heal within 6-8 weeks. Occasionally some people have ongoing problems, these can include ongoing pain particularly if the fracture hasn't healed. Occasionally fractures which do not heal, need surgery to encourage healing, however this is very uncommon.

It is important that if you are having ongoing problems that you contact us as you may require further investigations. Most patients will not need further tests.

## Do I need further x-rays?

The overwhelming number of these fractures heal with no problems. However, sometimes that healing isn't with bone but is 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. Most people do not need any further x-rays unless they are having problems.

## 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 job.

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 **01772522878**.

## 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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[patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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