

Removal of your External Fixator

Information for Patients

Division of Surgery Orthopaedic Trauma

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

Frame Service
Nottingham University Hospitals
Tel: 0115 9249924 ext:62472
07875165691

Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet is aimed at patients having treatment in external fixator frames to provide information on what happens when it is time for the frame to be removed.

When will my frame be removed ?

The length of time you will have the frame is dependant on the reason for your frame and your specific treatment plan.

Your orthopaedic consultant will inform you when it is time to consider frame removal. Regular X-rays during your treatment will guide the clinical decision.

Sometimes at the time your frame is ready to be removed your consultant will loosen struts on your frame for a few weeks to 'test' how strong the bone is. Your consultant will make the decision whether your frame is to be loosened prior to frame removal and this is done on an individual basis.

Where will I have my frame removed

Your frame can be removed in fracture clinic by a nurse practitioner or doctor with gas and air analgesia (Entonox) and you will also be advised to take pain killers just prior to the procedure.

Will the frame be removed on the same day as my consultant review?

This is sometimes able to be undertaken on the same day as your consultant review depending on the time of day as you will need to be in clinic for up to two hours after the procedure. It may be preferable to arrange a different day but this will be discussed in advance wherever possible.

Planning for frame removal

During your treatment in a frame there will be time to discuss frame removal in clinic with the medical team, nurse practitioner and other patients who have undergone this procedure. It is not a pain free procedure as the wires and half pins are in the bone but most people tolerate this. You will have a trial of a wire removed to decide if able to continue with full frame removal. We understand everyone is different with varying levels of pain tolerance therefore if you would prefer not to have the frame removed in clinic, you would have a date arranged on an operating list.

After frame removal

Your pin-sites will be dressed and you will have a plaster cast applied for at least two weeks. This may then be changed to an air cast boot or other support whilst your bone further heals, decided on an individual basis.

Your medical team, physiotherapy team and frame nurse practitioner will continue to review you regularly in clinic and X-rays will guide the decision when to completely remove plaster casts and supports.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204

From a mobile or abroad: 0115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301

E-mail: pals@nuh.nhs.uk

Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614,
Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email
patientinformation@nuh.nhs.uk or phone 0115 924 9924
ext. 67184.

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