If I have any questions who should I contact?
If you have any questions about returning to activities you can ask your surgeon or physiotherapist on the day of the operation.

If you have any problems following discharge then we advise you to telephone the ward which you returned to after your surgery.

If you have any clinical questions concerning your orthopaedics operation, please telephone 01202 704693.

Sandbourne Day Cases 01202 726104
Ward 9 01202 704724
Ward 12 01202 704770

Exercise pictures copied from Tools RG PhysioTools

Our Vision
Putting patients first while striving to deliver the best quality healthcare.

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This leaflet from the Orthopaedic Directorate has been designed to answer any questions you may have

Website: www.rbch.nhs.uk Tel: 01202 303626
Introduction
This booklet is for patients who have been told that they will have to be ‘non weight bearing’ after their orthopaedic surgery at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital. This means that for a period of time after your operation you should not take weight through the operated leg/foot to allow it time to heal.

We have developed this guide to help answer any questions that you may have about how you will manage after your operation. It will be useful during each of your hospital visits so please bring it with you.

The booklet is a general guide and there may be alterations in your management made by your surgeon, anaesthetist, nurse or therapist. Those instructions should take priority.

All members of the Orthopaedic team are committed to providing you with the highest standards of care and we look forward to helping you with your recovery.

Why am I not allowed to take weight through my operated leg?
There are many different operations which may require you to protect your leg or foot by not standing on it for a period of time. For example you may have a broken bone, a bone graft, a joint replacement or you may have had surgery to repair a tendon or ligament. By keeping weight off your leg/foot you will protect it and give it time to heal.

What happens after the operation (while I am in hospital)?
Due to the nature of your operation you will usually spend a night in hospital after your surgery.

Exercises
The nature of your surgery requires that you demand more of your arms to help you to get around. We advise that you do the following exercises up until you come into hospital. If you have problems with your arm or hands then just do what you can.

Exercise 1. Seated lifts
Sitting on a chair with your back straight. Clasp the arms of the chair and lift your bottom from the seat by straightening your arms. Try to maintain this position for five seconds. Repeat five times. Repeat up to three sets until your muscles feel tired.

Repeat this exercise three times each day.

Exercise 2. Arm punches
Sit or stand holding your hands on your chest with a weight or food cans in your hands. Alternating your arms, lift the weights from your chest straight up and bring back down. Repeat 15 times. Repeat up to three sets until your muscles feel tired. You can do this without weights if you cannot manage. Repeat this exercise three times each day.

Exercise 3. Bicep curls
Stand with your arms by your sides and a weight in each hand. Keep your palms facing forwards. Bend alternate elbows briskly up towards your shoulders. Repeat 15 times. Repeat up to three sets until your muscles feel tired. Repeat this exercise three times each day.
How to go up and down steps or stairs
If you have steps or stairs at home you will be given a chance to practice these with crutches so that you know how best to do these once you are home.

To go up a step or stairs
- Hold onto a handrail if you have one, with a crutch in your other hand. If there is no handrail then use both crutches.
- First hop up with your ‘good’ leg.
- Then bring your crutch(es) up onto the same step.

To go down a step or stairs
- Hold onto a handrail if you have one, with a crutch in your other hand. If there is no handrail then use both crutches.
- First put your crutch(es) onto the step below.
- Then lower your ‘good’ leg onto the same step.

If you feel you cannot manage the stairs you can arrange to sleep downstairs or go up and down the stairs on your bottom if you are safe.

Looking after yourself
No matter what you are doing you MUST NOT put weight through your operated leg. Before you come into hospital you should think about the activities you do as part of your daily routine. It is worth taking some time to consider how you will manage these after your operation.

For example:
- Shopping
- Cooking

- Cleaning
- Washing
- Socialising
- Transport

It is not always necessary to stop these tasks. Keeping active is important as inactivity can lead to its own complications.

Washing and dressing
You will not be able to use a bath or shower while you are non weight bearing. You may wish to place a chair or stool in your bathroom so that you can sit down while you wash.

If you have a low toilet and/or nothing to assist you as you stand up you may require a temporary loan of a raised toilet seat from the occupational therapy department.

Cooking/Meals
You may wish to place a stool or chair in the kitchen so that you can sit down while you prepare food and wash up.

You will not be able to carry a plate or cup while using crutches or a walking frame so you may want to sit and eat your food in the kitchen.

Some people find it useful to use a bag or an apron with a front pocket to carry a flask or other items through to another room.

Going out of the house
It may be useful to have use of a wheelchair while you are non weight bearing so that you can go outdoors. It is possible to hire a wheelchair from the Red Cross. The Red Cross can also provide other pieces of equipment which you may find helpful.
What happens when I go home?
You will be asked to come back to the outpatient clinic within a few weeks following your surgery. A letter with your appointment will be sent to you in the post once you have returned home. This appointment is for the surgeon or a member of their team to review your progress. You may have an x-ray taken at this point. You will be advised when you are allowed to take weight and walk ‘normally’.

Different types of weight bearing
As you recover your weight bearing will change. Only progress the amount of weight that you take through your foot when your surgeon tells you and not before.

The following paragraphs will outline what you may progress to.

Non weight bearing
You must not put weight through the operated leg or foot. This includes when standing up and sitting down.

Touch weight bearing
When standing or walking the toes of the operated leg can touch the floor but you should not put weight through it. You will need to use crutches or a walking frame.

Partial weight bearing
You can take some weight through your operated leg but not all of your weight. You will need crutches or a walking frame to help you to do this.

Heel weight bearing
Weight can be put through the heel of the operated foot but you should not take weight through the front of your foot or your toes. Crutches or walking sticks can help you with your balance.

You will need to be seen by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist. They will teach you how to move around safely following your operation and can advise you on the best way to manage your day to day activities such as washing, dressing and cooking. They will ensure you will manage safely before you go home.

How will I move around?
The physiotherapist can provide different types of walking aids. The type of walking aid you will have depends on which is most suitable and which you find easiest to use.

Elbow crutches
If you have strong arms and good balance you can use two elbow crutches. You should place the crutches a little way in front of you and then hop your non operated leg forwards to the crutches.

Walking Frame
A walking frame or ‘zimmer frame’ will provide you with more support and stability if you need it. You should place the frame a little way in front of you and whilst taking some weight through your arms you should hop your non operated leg forwards.

If there is a reason why you cant use elbow crutches or a walking frame we may be able to provide you with a different type of aid.

Whenever you are not moving around you should elevate your leg on a stool while you are sitting. This will help to reduce swelling in your foot and ankle.