



Student Health Center

UNC Wilmington

INSTRUCTION SHEET: FOOT FRACTURE (NONDISPLACED)

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a fracture (break) of your foot. The parts of the broken bone are not pushed out of place (displaced); therefore, healing should be easier.

Generally, this type of break is treated (at least initially) without a cast. Instead, a soft wrap and special shoe are used to support and protect the foot. Ambulating (walking) of an essential nature can be continued. Sometimes, crutches are necessary to avoid any weight-bearing on the foot.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR FOOT FRACTURE:

- 1- Rest your foot. Minimize walking and standing.
- 2- Elevate the foot, especially in the initial 48 hours after the injury. Keep the foot up on pillows, above the level of the heart. Elevation helps reduce swelling.
- 3- Apply cold packs to the foot off-and-on for the initial 48 hours after injury. Cold helps decrease discomfort and swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the foot, causing discomfort. Rather, aim for coolness, yet comfort, applying a layer or two of towel between the cold pack and foot. The soft wrap can be removed when you apply cold.
- 4- Wear the soft wrap and special shoe whenever you are walking or standing. The wrap and shoe can be removed while sleeping.
- 5- If needed, use crutches to avoid weight-bearing for several days. After a few days, as pain allows, begin gradual weight-bearing using the wrap and shoe for support.
- 6- Over-the-counter pain medications can relieve discomfort associated with a broken foot. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preference.
- 7- The provider may prescribe stronger pain medication. Take the prescription medicine only if needed; do not take the medication and perform dangerous activities such as driving a car or operating machinery.
- 8- Make a prompt follow-up appointment as directed. If you are referred to an orthopedic (bone) doctor, tell the office that you have a broken foot, and need a “work-in” appointment in the next several days. Pick up your X-rays before your appointment. The orthopedic doctor can follow the progress of healing, help minimize the possibility of long-term foot problems, and assist you in scheduling a return to normal activities with the foot.