



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: FOOT FRACTURE (NONDISPLACED)

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a fracture (break) of your foot. As with any broken bone, the injury is serious, and proper treatment is essential. Fortunately, the parts of the broken bone are not out of place (displaced); therefore, healing should be easier.

Swelling and pain in the foot occur with a fracture; the amount of each varies with individuals. Similarly, the amount of time you will be unable to walk on your foot varies.

This type of break is sometimes treated with a cast, but sometimes, just a soft wrap and special shoe are used. Crutches may or may not be necessary to avoid weight-bearing on the foot.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR FOOT FRACTURE:

1. Rest your foot. Minimize walking and standing. Use crutches if they are provided. Stay off the foot until a medical provider tells you it is okay to bear weight.
2. A soft wrap helps support the foot and lessen swelling, especially during the initial 48 hours. If the wrap feels too tight, loosen it.
3. Elevate the foot, especially in the initial 48 hours after injury. Keep the foot up on pillows, above the level of the heart. Elevation helps reduce swelling.
4. Apply cold packs to the foot off-and-on for the initial 48 hours after injury. Cold helps ease discomfort and minimize additional swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the foot, causing discomfort. Rather, aim for coolness, yet comfort, applying a layer or two of cloth between the cold pack and foot. The soft wrap can be removed when you apply cold.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Make a *prompt* follow-up appointment as directed. If you make an appointment with an orthopedic (bone) doctor, be sure to tell the office you have a broken foot and need a “work-in” appointment in the next one or three days. Pick up your X-rays and take them to 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.
8. If you are having severe pain or an unusual problem with the foot, return to the Student Health Center or see another medical provider promptly.