

## Finger injuries

### How many follow up appointments will I need?

Between one and two.

### What happens at the first follow up?

Your splint will be removed and / or changed. Some fingers may be x-rayed in the splint.

You may be referred to a hand physiotherapist to manage your recovery.

### What happens at the second follow up?

The splint is removed if it's still on and your range of movement is checked. Physiotherapy may be recommended.

## Fracture clinic surcharges by age

Under 14 years	Free
Over 14 years with no CSC*	\$30.00
14 - 17 years with CSC	\$12.50
Over 18 years with CSC	\$18.50

\*CSC - Community Services Card

**24 Hour Surgery**  
**401 Madras Street**  
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**Urgent medical and accident care 24/7**  
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Phone: 365-7777



## Frequently asked questions – what you need to know

The information in this booklet is a guide only and each patient's needs are different. If you have any questions or concerns talk with a fracture clinic nurse or doctor.

### You've got a fracture - what happens next?

1. A nurse will put on a cast, sling or splint depending on your injury. Crutches will be provided if needed.
2. You will be given advice about your injury and how to care for it.
3. If you have a cast, you may need to come to the 24 Hour Surgery within the next three days for a check.
4. If your injury needs a follow up, **an appointment for the fracture clinic will need to be made.**

### Why does my cast need to be checked within three days after it was put on?

If you have had a full cast applied, we will see you back within the next three days to check your circulation, cast and that you are managing ok. If appropriate we will change your cast into a lighter synthetic cast. There is an ACC surcharge if you get your cast changed at this time and you are 14 years of age or over. If no change of cast, this check is free but future fracture clinic appointments have a surcharge.

### How do I make a follow up appointment at the fracture clinic?

If you need to be reviewed, the nurse or reception will make a follow up appointment at the fracture clinic.

**An initial appointment is made at the time of your first presentation and then following each fracture clinic appointment.** We do not post or email appointments out to people.

If you were told you need a review, but leave without making an appointment, contact the 24 Hour Surgery on 03 365 7777.

### **Who will see you at the follow up fracture clinic?**

The fracture clinics are run by either a 24 Hour Surgery medical officer, emergency consultant or orthopaedic consultant. They all have experience in fracture management.

Your injury/xray will also be reviewed separately to your consult as a further quality check.

### **What happens at your follow up fracture clinic appointment?**

A doctor will check your injury, provide an ACC certificate if needed and let you know the expected plan, such as, time in cast, time off sports / work etc.

We will usually change your cast to a synthetic, lightweight cast. You may be able to have a waterproof liner at an extra cost depending on the size of the cast.

If your injury is not in a cast, we will change the type of sling you have or apply a splint if needed.

Please remember to ask the doctor for an ACC certificate if you need one.

More details are included in this booklet for specific injuries.

### **How many appointments will I need at the fracture clinic?**

This varies depending on the type of injury and how severe it is. More details are included below for specific injuries.

## **Fracture of collarbone (clavicle) or shoulder, elbow not requiring cast**

### **How many follow up appointments will I need?**

Between three and four.

### **What happens at the first follow up?**

The doctor checks your level of pain and you will get a new sling/collar and cuff.

### **What happens at the second follow up?**

Your range of movement is checked and sometimes an x-ray is needed. Staff will show you exercises you can do and advise on how much you can move or use your arm. You may then be referred to a physiotherapist.

### **What happens at the third follow up?**

Your range of movement is checked to make sure it's returning to normal. Sometimes another x-ray is required.

### **What happens at the fourth follow up?**

Depending on severity and limitations of movement a fourth visit is sometimes required.



## Ankle fracture involving the joint

### How many follow up appointments will I need?

Between four and five.

### What happens at the first follow up?

If swelling has gone down, your cast will be changed and the ankle will be x-rayed in the cast.

### What happens at the second follow up?

Your ankle will be x-rayed in the cast to check that the fracture hasn't moved.

### What happens at the third follow up?

Your ankle will be x-rayed in the cast. You will be given a walking shoe if you are allowed to weight-bear.

### What happens at the fourth follow up?

Your cast will be removed and your ankle x-rayed.

### What happens if I need a fifth follow up?

Occasionally a final visit is needed after the cast is removed.

### How much will it cost?

- There is an ACC surcharge for each follow up appointment at the fracture clinic for those who are 14 years and over.
- There is no charge to be seen at the fracture clinic for children under 14 years.
- Any return visits out of fracture clinic hours will usually incur an ACC surcharge.
- If you need your cast checked within three days after it's put on and your cast is not changed, there is no charge for this visit.
- If you require follow up x-rays for this injury, you will not be charged.
- There may be an additional cost if you prefer a waterproof cast.
- There is a charge for the crutches, which is partly refunded when they are returned or they are yours to keep.

### How do I care for my cast? What do I need to look for?

The staff will give you an information pamphlet about plaster casts. It includes information about symptoms of swelling, circulation, how to care for your cast and how to wash with a cast. You can purchase a Waterproof Cast and Bandage Protector - to find your nearest stockist visit: [www.sealsure.co.nz](http://www.sealsure.co.nz).

### What do I do about pain?

Take medication if prescribed by your doctor. Usually regular Panadol is sufficient for pain relief. The doctor will prescribe stronger pain relief if needed. It is important you take pain relief as per the doctor's instructions.

The cast will provide pain relief by stopping the fractured limb from moving.

Movement is also very important to help with pain. Moving fingers or toes will help get swelling down which is the cause of most of the pain.

### What exercises should I do?

The nurse or doctor will give you information about what exercises you should be doing to help your recovery.

## **How long will it take to recover? When can I return to normal activity, e.g. sports?**

Each person is different, so discuss this with the doctor at your fracture clinic appointments.

## **Who do I call if I'm worried about my injury?**

Call the 24 Hour Surgery on 03 365 7777.

## **Who should I contact if I need help at home?**

ACC may be able to provide support, such as home help and transport. If you feel you may need extra help talk to a doctor or nurse. You can also contact the ACC patient help line.

ACC patient helpline - 0800 101 996, select 4 (Mon-Fri, 7am - 7pm)  
Have your ACC claim number ready.

## **Straight forward wrist, elbow or scaphoid fracture** (Scaphoid bone is one of the carpal bones in your hand around the area of your wrist)

### **How many follow up appointments will I need?**

Between two and three.

### **What happens at the first follow up?**

Your cast will be changed and your level of pain and movement will be checked.

### **What happens at the second follow up?**

Your cast will be removed and if the doctor is happy with your recovery you won't have to return. Scaphoid fractures will be x-rayed again.

## **Clinical Scaphoid treatment**

Sometimes a cast is applied if staff think there is a scaphoid fracture, but can't see one on the x-ray.

Some patients will be seen within the first week for early review and consideration of more investigations.

For most people the cast will stay on for two weeks. It will then be removed and another x-ray taken. If a fracture shows up a new cast is applied. If no fracture shows up you will be discharged.

Some scaphoid fractures require longer in cast so a fourth review maybe needed for a final x-ray.

## **Straight forward ankle or foot fracture**

### **How many follow up appointments will I need?**

Between two and three.

### **What happens at the first follow up?**

Your cast will be changed or a moonboot put on if appropriate. If you're not in a cast you will be checked for pain and mobility and advised on further management.

### **What happens at the second follow up?**

Your cast or moonboot will be removed. If the fracture clinic doctor has any concerns about your recovery they will ask you back for another visit and get another x-ray done. Otherwise, you will be discharged to your family doctor / general practitioner or a physiotherapist.

### **What happens if I need a third follow up?**

A third visit may be required to check your range of motion if the doctor is concerned when the cast comes off. This is not common.