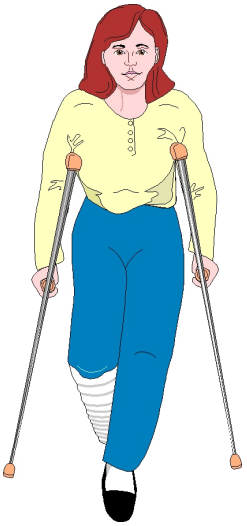
Use of Crutches

You have been prescribed crutches to take weight off one of your lower *extremities* (legs/feet).



When using crutches, make sure you are not putting pressure on your armpits. This could cause damage to the nerves in the *axilla* (your armpit area) that extend to your hands and arms. When fitted properly the crutches should be two to three finger breadths below your *axilla* (armpit). Your weight should be supported by your hands, and not by resting upon the crutches with your armpits.

When walking, first step with the crutches, then swing the healthy leg through and slightly ahead.

When going up stairs, first step up with the healthy leg and then follow with the crutches and injured leg up to the same step, and so forth. If there is a handrail, hold both crutches in one hand, place your other hand on the handrail, and while placing your weight on your arms, lift your good leg to the step, then bring the crutches and the injured leg up to that step. Repeat for each step.

When going down stairs, first step with the injured leg and crutches, following down with the healthy leg to the same step. Be very careful, as going down stairs with crutches is very challenging. If you feel wobbly or nervous, sit down and inch yourself down the stairs on your butt.

To get up from a chair, hold injured leg forward, grab armrest with one hand and the top of the crutches with the other hand. Using these supports, pull yourself up to a standing position. **Reverse this procedure for sitting**.

See your personal caregiver for follow up as suggested. If you are discharged in an ace wrap and develop numbness, tingling, swelling, or increased pain, loosen the ace wrap and re-wrap looser. If these problems persist, see your caregiver as needed.

If you have been instructed to use partial weight bearing, bear (apply) the amount of weight as suggested by your caregiver. Do not bear weight in an amount that causes pain on the area of injury.

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