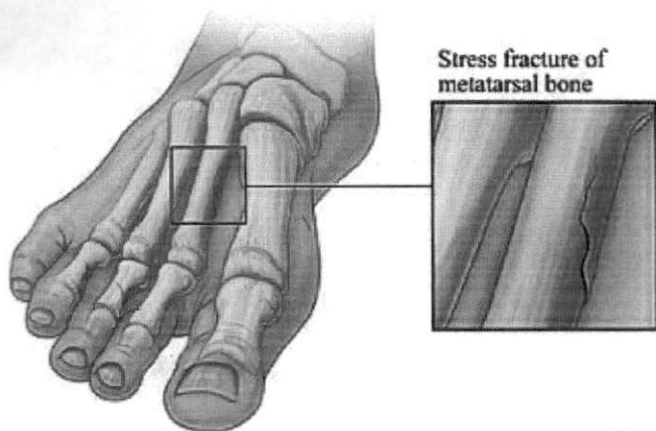


Metatarsal Fracture: Care Instructions



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Your Care Instructions

A metatarsal fracture is a break or a thin, hairline crack in one of the metatarsal bones of the foot. This type of fracture usually happens from repeated stress on the bones of the foot. Or it can happen when a person jumps or changes direction quickly and twists his or her foot or ankle the wrong way. This fracture is common among dancers because their work involves a lot of jumping, and balancing and turning on one foot.

Treatment depends on how bad the fracture is and where the fracture is on the bone. You may or may not have had surgery. Your doctor may have put your foot in a cast or splint to keep it stable. You may have been given crutches to use to keep weight off your foot.

A metatarsal fracture may take from 6 weeks to several months to heal. It is important to give your foot time to heal completely, so that you do not hurt it again. Do not return to your usual activities until your doctor says you can. Your doctor may suggest that you get physical therapy to help regain strength and range of motion in your foot.

You heal best when you take good care of yourself. Eat a variety of healthy foods, and don't smoke.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It is also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
 - If your doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Follow your doctor's instructions about how much weight you can put on your foot and when you can go back to your usual activities. If you were given crutches, use them as directed.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your foot for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Try to do this every 1 to 2 hours for the next 3 days (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Prop up your foot on a pillow when you ice it or anytime you sit or lie down for the next 3 days. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.

Cast and splint care

- If your foot is in a cast or splint, follow the cast or splint care instructions your doctor gives you. If you have a removable fiberglass walking cast or a splint, do not take it off unless your doctor tells you to.
- Keep your cast or splint dry. If you have a removable fiberglass walking cast or a splint, ask your doctor if it is okay to remove it to bathe. Your doctor may want you to keep it on as much as possible.
- If you're told to keep your cast or splint on, tape a sheet of plastic to cover it when you bathe. Or ask your doctor about products that can help keep a cast or splint dry. Water under the cast or splint can cause your skin to itch and hurt.
- Never cut your cast or stick anything down it to scratch an itch on your leg.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have problems with your cast or splint. For example:
 - The skin under the cast or splint is burning or stinging.

- The cast or splint feels too tight.
- There is a lot of swelling near the cast or splint. (Some swelling is normal.)
- You have a new fever.
- There is drainage or a bad smell coming from the cast or splint.
- You have increased or severe pain.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in your foot and toes.
- You cannot move your toes.
- Your foot turns cold or changes color.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- The pain does not get better day by day.
- You do not get better as expected.

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