

# Your child's growth plate fusion surgery for their leg deformity

Children's Hospital

Information for Patients

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## What is growth plate fusion?

Growth plates are found at each end of all long bones, these fuse (close) naturally when children reach bone maturity and stop growing, typically between the ages of 18 and 25 years.

Epiphysiodesis is a procedure that 'fuses' (closes) the growth plate. By doing this, you are stopping the bone from growing at the growth plate.

The most common method of epiphysiodesis is by inserting a small device called an eight-plate, this is done under a general anaesthetic (whilst asleep). The aim of the eight-plate is to stop growth on one side of the leg whilst natural growth continues on the other side. This allows the leg to straighten as it grows.

## Common conditions that might need this operation are:

- Knock knees (valgus deformity) which is where the knees angle in and touch each other when the legs are straightened.
- Bowed legs (varus deformity) which is where the legs appear bowed out meaning the knees stay wide apart even when the ankles are together.
- Injury and infection can also cause limbs to grow unevenly.

## How long will my child be in hospital?

Your child will be seen by a physiotherapist who will show them how to use crutches before going home. Discharge is usually the same day as long as the physiotherapist is happy that your child can use their crutches safely and they have recovered from their anaesthetic.

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## Aftercare advice

- Have some paracetamol and ibuprofen ready at home for pain relief.
- The wound will be covered with a small dressing. Dressings need to stay in place for 5 days, after which they may be changed. Keep the wounds clean and dry. Your child may shower after 5 or 6 days.
- The stitches are dissolvable.
- The wound will be checked after 2 weeks in clinic, an appointment will be sent in the post.

Your child will need to attend regular outpatient appointments with their consultant to monitor progress. When the treatment has been completed the eight-plate or plates will be removed under general anaesthetic.

## What are the possible complications?

- For some children, this surgery causes more pain than we expect and they stay in hospital for an extra 3 or 4 days. It is difficult to know which children might have a lower pain threshold and who therefore need to be in hospital longer.
- Infection - this is uncommon but would be treated with antibiotics.
- There may be some scarring from the wound.
- There may be some altered sensation around the wound; this will fade in time.
- The correction may not be fully complete. This can be due to timing of the surgery. Follow-up appointments are essential to help prevent this happening.
- Occasionally the eight-plate can move and may need to be replaced.

The consultant will discuss all the complications fully with you before surgery at your pre-assessment appointment. This is an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

## Contact details

Secretary (Julie Keeley):	0116 258 5756 (8am to 4pm)
Specialist Nurse (Jo Shaw):	07950 888 466
Ward 19:	0116 258 5244 (24 hours)

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