



Crutch Use

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

When using crutches, make sure you are not putting pressure on the armpit (axilla). This could cause damage to the nerves that extend from your axilla to the hand and arm. When fitted properly the crutches should be 2 to 3 finger widths below the axilla. Your weight should be supported by your hand, and not by resting upon the crutch with the axilla.

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.

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

See your healthcare provider for follow up as suggested. If you are discharged in an elastic bandage (Tensor™) and develop numbness, tingling, swelling, or increased pain, loosen the ace wrap and re-wrap looser. If these problems persist, see your healthcare provider as needed.

This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.