

Return to activity

- You may return to school as soon as possible e.g. even the day after surgery! Discuss this with your nurse before leaving the hospital.
- You should always check with your Orthopaedic Consultant before returning to PE or any other activities or sports. You should not use a trampoline, bouncing castle or participate in any rough play/contact sports until you have been advised it is safe to do so.
- Your nurse will advise you when you can return to swimming as this will depend on how your wounds are healing.
- Regaining your normal gait (which is the way you walk) may take some time. This is because you are now entering the rehabilitation phase and this can take some months. During this time you may, for example, still have an altered pattern of walking and think the treatment was not successful (even though it was!). Your physiotherapist will discuss any concerns you may have but remember, your treatment continues after your fixator / frame comes off.



For more information on fixator removal, please contact The Limb Reconstruction Department in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Dublin.

Contact details:

Phone 01 409 6100, Bleep 8754 (Mon-Fri)

At all other times please phone 01 4096100 and ask for the Orthopaedic Registrar on call.

Developed by the Limb Reconstruction Multi-Disciplinary Team

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Sláinte Leanaí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland

ADVICE FOLLOWING REMOVAL OF A FIXATOR / FRAME

Information for children /
adolescents and their
parents/carers



Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin

Phone: 01 409 6100



Your fixator / frame has been removed. You, your family and hospital / community team have worked hard to get to this point so well done!

This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have after your fixator/frame has been removed. If you have any further questions, you can ask a member of your hospital team.

Physiotherapy

- If your fixator/frame was on the lower part of your leg, you may be advised to wear a boot or your leg may be in a cast for a few weeks.
- After your fixator/frame has been removed, you may be advised to walk using a zimmer frame or crutches for a few weeks. Do not worry; this will not be for too long! This advice is given to protect your leg now that the fixator/frame has been removed.
- Your leg may feel weak initially once your fixator/frame has been removed. This is normal and will improve, as your leg gets stronger.
- For the first two weeks, after your fixator/frame is removed you should focus on walking (with a walking aid if advised), gradually putting more weight through your leg as you are able, and doing some gentle

exercises. Initially, you will be advised to only do gentle exercises that involve working on your range of movement and strength.

- Your physiotherapist will advise you on which exercises to start with. You should not do any exercises that involve pushing your knee or ankle until your physiotherapist has advised that it is safe to do these.

Wound / Scar Management

- Pin site wounds heal very quickly following wire and pin removal. You will still have some wound care to carry out at home for a couple of weeks after your fixator/frame is removed. You will be given advice before you leave the hospital on how to manage your wounds at home.
- Scars form as part of normal wound healing. When the skin's surface is injured (e.g. by having a fixator/frame applied) scar tissue forms close to the wound. Scars often heal over time by becoming flatter and paler in colour.
- If a scar becomes itchy, sore/uncomfortable or restricts movement across a joint after removal of your fixator/frame, you may be referred to an Occupational Therapist.



My Feelings

- You might feel a number of different emotions after your fixator/frame is removed. For instance, you might feel happy and excited that it is off, while at the same time you might feel scared and anxious, wanting to protect your leg from getting hurt. It is normal to feel like this, especially in the first few weeks after the fixator/frame has been removed.
- Be patient with yourself and with your leg as you recover. Send yourself kind and encouraging thoughts as a reminder of how far you have come since the fixator/frame was put on your leg. For example, you could say to yourself: "I have come a long way", "My leg is getting stronger day by day", "and I'm doing my best". Saying things like this to yourself each day can help you to feel good about yourself and about your recovery. First thing in the morning or just before bedtime can be good times to do this.
- If you notice that you are worrying about your leg a lot, or if you are feeling down, it is a good idea to talk to an adult you trust – talking about how you feel can help a lot.