

### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Twitter.com/WhitHealth  
Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Whittington Health NHS Trust  
Magdala Avenue  
London  
N19 5NF  
Phone: 020 7272 3070  
[www.whittington.nhs.uk](http://www.whittington.nhs.uk)

Date published: 20/09/2019  
Review date: 20/09/2021  
Ref: EIM/ED/CU/02

© Whittington Health  
Please recycle



## Crutches use

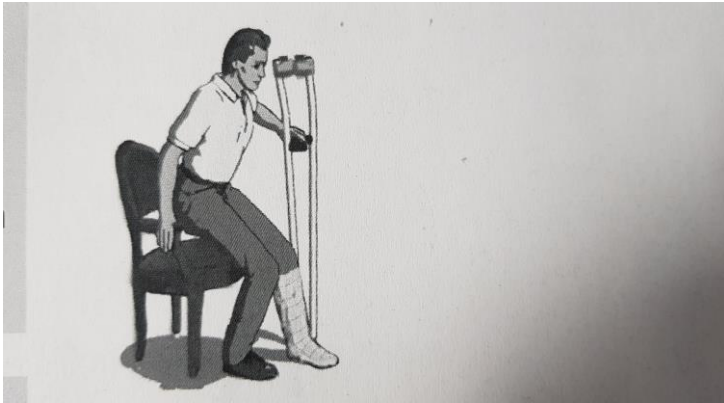
### A patient's guide



## Using Crutches

### Standing

Place the crutches into the “H” position. Then place one hand on both handles and stand up. Once standing, place each hand through the elbow cuffs of the crutches and hold the handles (handles facing forward).



For stability in standing, each crutch should be slightly in front and out to the side of your feet.

### Sitting

Take each arm out of the crutches and place them in the “H” position, and hold both handles with one hand. Once you feel balanced, reach back for the arm of the chair with your free hand. In a slow and controlled manner, lower yourself into the sitting position.

If you have any further queries, please contact the hospital or department who issued the crutches.

### For trough/gutter crutches:

- Check that the handgrip angle adjustment is tight and the trough attachment bolts are right.
- Once set there should not be any reason to adjust the crutches without consultation with the issuer.

### To check the correct height of the crutches:

- When standing upright holding the hand grips, your elbow should be slightly bent.
- When standing upright with your hands by your side, the crutch hand grips should be just above the level of your wrist joint.

## Walking

### For non-weight bearing:

Keeping the affected leg/foot off the ground and taking the weight through the unaffected leg, place the crutches one step ahead level with each other. Move forwards between the crutches, swinging the unaffected leg to land in between or very slightly forward of the crutches.

### For partial weight bearing:

Take some weight through the affected leg, place the crutches one step ahead, level with each other. Place the affected leg on the ground, just before the crutches, then step through with the affected leg.



## On stairs

Where possible use a handrail and hold both crutches in the same hand, or give the spare crutch to someone else to carry for you.



## Going up stairs

1. Unaffected leg
2. Affected leg
3. Crutch

## Going down stairs

1. Crutch
2. Affected leg
3. Unaffected leg

## Care and maintenance of your crutches

Regularly check that the:

- Rubber tips are not worn to the point where there is no tread showing.
- Crutches are a matching pair; do not use a mismatched pair.
- Crutches are tight and are not cracked.
- Spring tips are located in both holes.
- Adjustment mechanism adjusts freely.
- The holes on the adjustment legs are round and not worn to an oval shape.
- Always use the crutches as advised by the issuer.
- Avoid wet floors and uneven surfaces, and remove obstacles such as loose rugs before using crutches.
- Wear well-fitting supportive footwear.
- A mild detergent and warm water can be used for cleaning metal crutches.

Regularly inspect crutches for wear. If any of the above becomes apparent please contact the hospital or department who issued the crutches.