Minor Injuries of the Foot

Information for parents and carers

What is a metatarsal fracture?

The metatarsals are the bones in the foot that attach the toes to the ankle. A fracture is the same as a cracked or broken bone. This will be seen on an x-ray. These are minor injuries that will make a full recovery.

What to expect

- Your child will have some pain. It should be mild and settle over the next few days, but it may take 2-6 weeks for the pain to fully disappear.

- There may be bruising and swelling which is normal and should improve during the first week.

- It can take 4-6 weeks before the bone has fully healed. If you were given a supportive boot, you can stop using this after 2 weeks when there is little pain on walking. You should then wear a cushioned, supportive shoe.

Treatment

- These injuries heal well with time. They do not need a cast or need to visit a bone specialist. Your child may be given a rigid boot or shoe that can support the injured foot while it is healing, or a well cushioned supportive shoe does the same job.

- Gentle movement and body weight can be taken while wearing the boot. This works better than keeping it completely still. Moving the foot gently, even if it causes a little discomfort, will not cause more damage.

- Keep the foot up on a pillow when sitting. This will reduce swelling.

- Improve movement by flexing the ankle up and down. Try tracing circles with the big toe in the air.

- Use paracetamol or Ibuprofen as a painkiller. Please always give medication as indicated on the label.

Returning to sport

- Return to 'no-impact' sport like swimming gradually once the pain has improved, usually 2-4 weeks.

- Once your child is pain free and able to run without causing the pain to return, they can return to their normal activities. This is usually around 4 weeks.

If your child's pain is not improving or they are still experiencing high levels of pain after 4 weeks, please contact the Emergency Department on 0131 312 0007/8 and ask for a face-to-face review clinic appointment.