

Crutch Use: Care Instructions

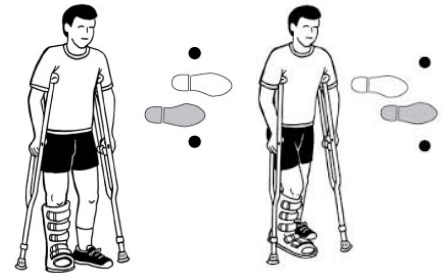
Be sure your crutches fit you. When you stand up in your normal posture, there should be space for two or three fingers between the top of the crutch and your armpit. When you let your hands hang down, the hand grips should be at your wrists. When you put your hands on the hand grips, your elbows should be slightly bent.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Walking

- Bend your elbows slightly. Press the padded top parts of the crutches against your sides, under your armpits
- Put both crutches about 12 inches in front of you
- Put your **weight on the handgrips**, not on the pads under your arms. (Constant pressure against your underarms can cause numbness.) Swing your body forward. If you have been told not to put any weight on your injured leg, keep that leg bent and off the ground.
- To complete the step, put your **weight on the healthy leg**.
- Move your crutches about 12 inches in front of you, and begin the next step.
- Take small steps.
- Use ramps and elevators when you can.



Sitting down and getting up from a chair

- To sit, back up to the chair. Use one hand to hold both crutches by the handgrips, beside your injured leg. With the other hand, hold onto the seat and slowly lower yourself onto the chair.
- **Lay crutches on the ground** near your chair. If you prop them up, they may fall over.
- To get up from a chair, pick up the crutches and put them in one hand beside your injured leg. Put your weight on the handgrips of the crutches and on your good leg to stand up.



Going up and down stairs

- To go up stairs, step up with your good leg and then bring the crutches and your injured leg to the step. To go down stairs, put your crutches and injured leg on the lower step. Then bring your good leg to the lower step. This saying may help you remember: **"Up with the good, down with the bad."**
- For stairs that have handrails: Put both crutches under the arm opposite the handrail. Use the hand opposite the handrail to hold both crutches by the handgrips. Hold onto the handrail as you go up or down. Follow the same process you use for stairs: Put your good leg on the step first when you go up. Lead with your crutches and injured leg on the way down.

