

# Guided Growth for Leg Deformity



## Orthopedic Clinic

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4  
604-875-2345 • 1-888-300-3088  
[www.bcchildrens.ca](http://www.bcchildrens.ca)

## Your surgeon has recommended an operation to correct a leg deformity (knocked or bowed knees)

### Plates

Are used to correct a deformity affecting the angle of the bone, for example, knock knees or bowed legs. They are inserted into one side of the growth plate in the bone, guiding growth of the legs until they are straight.



### The Operation

You will be asked to bring your child into the hospital the day of the operation. Your surgery time and fasting (stopping all eating and drinking) will be given to you the day before your scheduled surgery date. Your child will need a general anaesthetic (medicine given to make you go to sleep) for this operation.

The surgeon will speak with you and your child about what the operation involves. There may be one or two scars, one at the top of the tibia (just below the knee) and or one at the end of the femur (just above the knee). There will be a bandage over the wounds after surgery. The stitches do not need to be removed as they are dissolvable.

### Aftercare

Your child will be able to walk with crutches as soon as they are comfortable. You may find that a wheelchair is helpful for going out. You can call the Red Cross to get one and it is a good idea to let them know as soon as you know the operation date.

The wounds will be checked in the orthopaedic clinic around 10 days after surgery. The wound

should be kept dry until you are seen in the orthopaedic clinic. Encourage normal knee movement and when comfortable your child can go back to school.

**Your child will be seen regularly in the clinic to check the alignment of the leg. It is very important to keep all of your child's appointments while they have the plate in their leg.**

Plates are removed when the leg has straightened out. They are removed using a general anaesthetic.

If the operation to remove the plate is not done the leg will not be straight.

### Possible complications

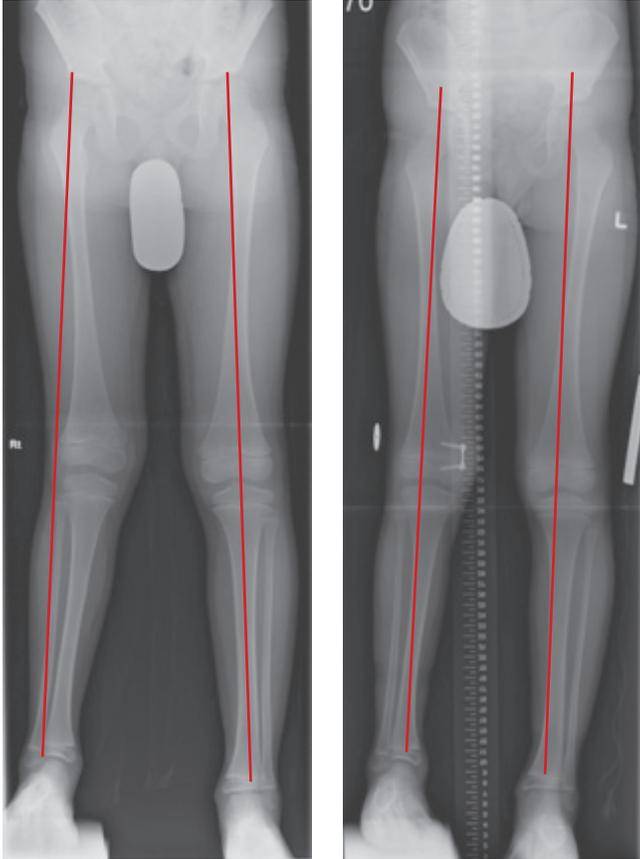
The healthcare team will make your child's stay in hospital and the treatment they receive as safe as possible. However complications can happen. You should ask the healthcare team if there is anything you do not understand.

The anaesthesiologist will be able to speak with you the possible complications of your child having an anaesthetic. Pain medicine will be given as prescribed by your surgeon.

Bleeding can happen during or after surgery and there maybe scarring as a result of the surgical wound. If the surgical wound becomes infected it will usually settle with antibiotics but may sometimes need further surgery. There may be altered feeling at the operation site, this may be temporary or permanent.

Very occasionally plates can move and may need replacing. Incomplete correction or deformity in the other direction may happen, this depends on the timing of surgery.

## Follow up is essential to avoid these possibilities



Line goes through center of knee with the plate correcting knock knee

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is the plate meant to be permanent?

No, it should be removed upon correction of the joint position.

### How long can the plate safely be left in place?

As long as it is required, until correction of the deformity has occurred. The typical range is 6-18 months.

### What are the reasons for plate surgery?

Any angular deformity (knocked knees or bowed legs) in a child who has open growth plates.

### Is a cast required after plate surgery?

No cast is required.

### Can your child go home on the day of surgery?

Yes, generally children go home after surgery on the same day.

### Are there any limitations or precautions in terms of walking?

None. Immediate walking and early motion are encouraged. Sometimes crutches are used for comfort.

### How often does my child have to come back for a clinic check-up?

It is recommended that your child be seen at least every 3 months to monitor their growth and decide when to remove the plate.

### Are there any reasons to not use the plate?

The plate should not be used for adult deformities or where the growth plate has closed, such as due to trauma, infection or maturity.

### What is the recommended age and/or size for a patient to have a plate?

Since the plate does not bear any body weight after it is implanted, child size really doesn't matter. The plate can be used successfully in children as young as 3 years or as old as 16 years, as long as the child is still growing.

**Contact your surgeon if you have further questions and concerns**

**It's good to ask!**