

Epiphysiodesis for limb length difference



Orthopaedic Clinic

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4
604-875-2345 1-888-300-3088
www.bcchildrens.ca

Your surgeon has recommended an operation to correct a limb length difference. This operation is usually recommended for a limb difference of approximately 2 to 5 centimeters.

An epiphysiodesis is an operation that stops a bone from growing from the growth plate at the end of your bone in your longer limb. This operation allows the bone to stop growing at a time that is predicted by your surgeon that would allow your short limb to “catch up” in growth to your longer limb. The goal is to have your limb lengths to be within 1 centimeter or less difference by the time you have stopped growing

This operation is only appropriate for children that are still growing.

Children’s growth plates naturally close in girls at about 14 years and boys at 16 years

This operation can be performed in one of two ways:

1. Drilling / scraping across your growth plate will stop further growth. The leg length difference will gradually decrease as the

opposite leg continues to grow and "catch up."

2. Metal screws, or a metal plate with screws, may be placed around the sides of the growth plate to slow or stop growth.

The operation is performed through very small incisions, using x-rays for guidance.

The Operation

You will be asked to come into the hospital the day of the operation. Your operation time and fasting (stopping all eating and drinking) will be given to you the day before your scheduled operation date. A general anesthetic is required (medicine given to make you go asleep)

The surgeon will speak with you and your child about the operation. There may be one or two scars on the sides of your limb. There will be a bandage over the wounds after the operation. The stitches do not need to be removed as they are dissolvable.

After Care

You will be able to walk with crutches a soon as you are comfortable. You may find a wheelchair is helpful for going out for longer distances. Please speak to the clinic if you think you require crutches or a wheelchair.

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The wounds will be checked in the orthopaedic clinic around 10 days after the operation. The wounds should be kept dry until you are seen in the orthopaedic clinic. Encourage normal movement of your limbs and joints. When comfortable you can return to school.

You will be seen regularly in the orthopaedic clinic to check your limb lengths. It is very important to keep these appointments while you are still growing.

Possible complications:

The healthcare team will make your child's visit to the 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 about the possible complications of your child having an anesthetic. Pain medication will be prescribed by your surgeon.

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

The possibility of a slight over- or under-correction of the limb length difference can happen.

This procedure allows for limb equalization to happen over many months as your child's limb grows. It is important to continue with all your follow up appointments to monitor the growth

Contact your surgeon if you have any further questions and concerns

It's good to ask!

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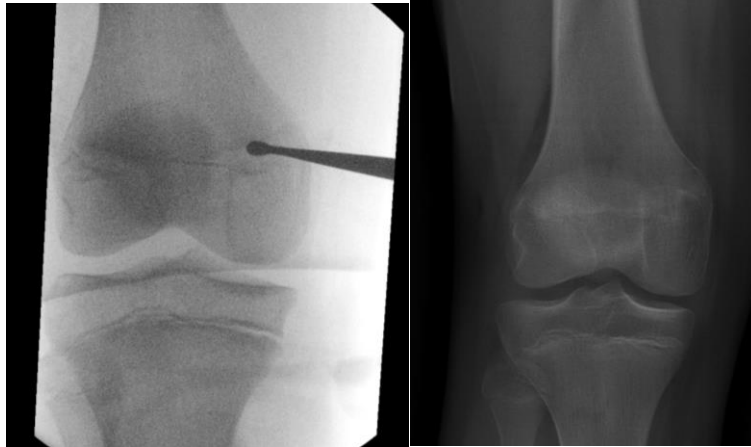


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1. Scraping across the growth plate during surgery



2. Metal screws around the growth plate to stop the growth