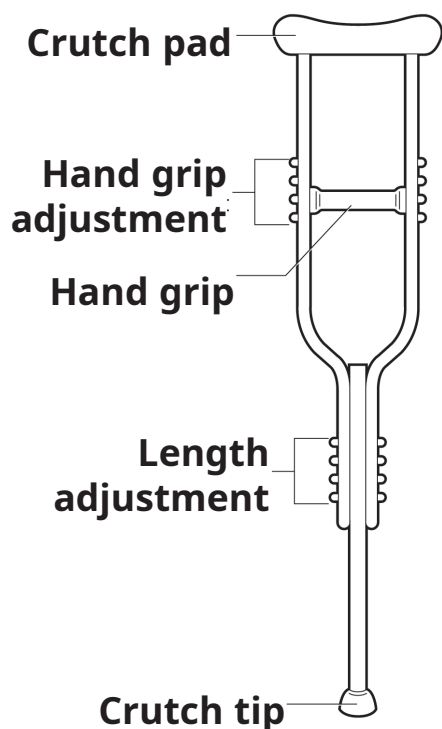


# Using Crutches

## For patients going home from hospital

Learn about:

- How to fit crutches properly
- How to walk safely with crutches
- How to go up and down stairs
- How to sit and stand with crutches



**Please remember:**  
If you had a general anesthetic, do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.



**Be sure to follow what your doctor has told you about how much weight you can put on your operated or injured leg.**



### **Safety tips**

- Look ahead as you walk with your crutches. Do not look down.
- Take short steps and rest as often as you need to. Use a handrail any time there is one.
- Wear well-fitted and low-heeled shoes.
- Watch out for loose items on the floor (rugs, electrical cords, toys) or anything you can trip over.
- Be careful when you are walking on uneven or slippery surfaces.
- Keep the rubber tips on your crutches dry. They can become slippery when wet. Never remove the rubber tips.
- Keep your crutches clean and in good repair.

## Fitting crutches

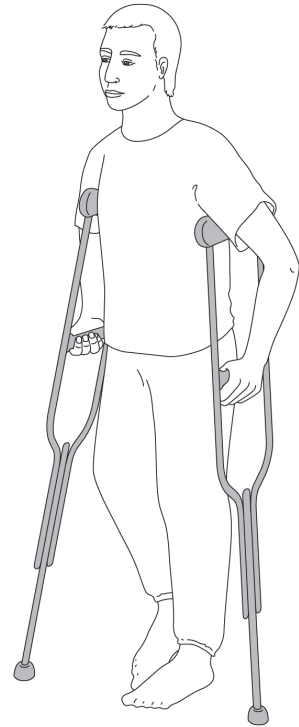
Make sure your crutches fit properly so they are comfortable and safe for you to use.

The top of your crutches (also called the crutch pads) should be about 3 finger widths below your armpits when you are standing up.

The hand grips should be at hip level when your arms are at your sides.

Your elbows should be slightly bent.

Hold the top of the crutches close to your sides. Use your hands to support your weight by squeezing the crutches to your side.



**Never rest your armpits or put weight on the top of the crutches. This can cause nerve damage.**

## Walking with crutches

Stand on your good leg and place one crutch under each arm.

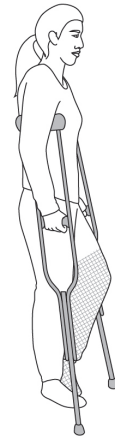
Place your hands on the handgrips with your thumbs inside and the other fingers wrapped around the outside.

To start walking put your crutches out in front of you (between 10 to 12 inches), keeping your weight on the good leg.

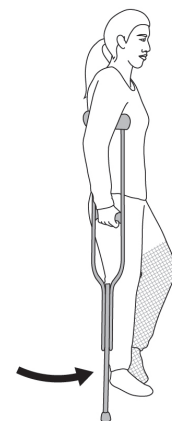
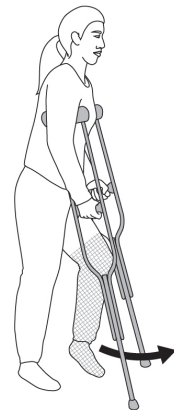
Carry your weight with your arms, shoulders and crutches and hop forward with your good leg. Or, step through **if you are allowed to put weight on your injured leg.**

Repeat your next step.

**Do not look down at your feet when you are walking.**



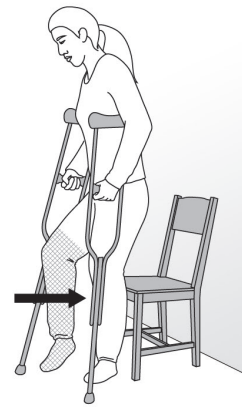
**\*In this pamphlet, the shaded leg is the operated or injured leg.**



## Sitting down on a chair, bed or toilet

**Make sure the seat is secure and steady.**

Move back until you touch the chair or bed with the back of your good leg.

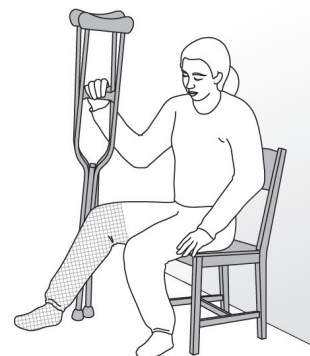


Then hold both crutches in the hand of the injured or operated side.

Hold the armrest of the chair or put your hand on the bed with your free hand.



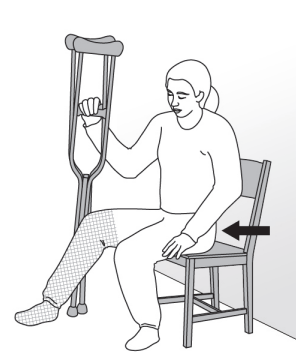
Lower yourself onto the chair or bed by bending your good knee and let your injured leg slide forward as you sit.



## Standing up from a chair or bed

Move yourself to the front edge of the chair or bed.

Hold both crutches in the hand of the injured or operated leg.

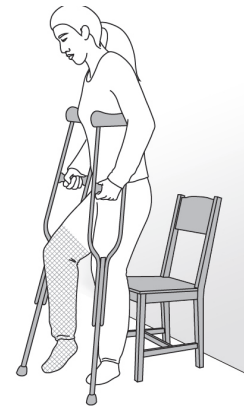


Move your good leg back until it touches the back of the chair or bed.

Put your weight on your good leg and push yourself up with your free hand. Stand on the good leg.



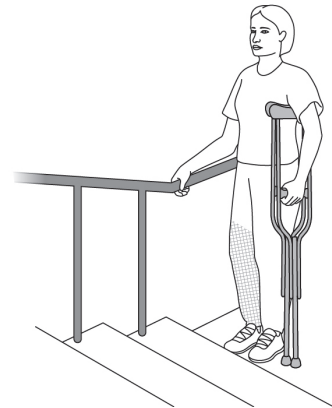
When you are standing, put one crutch under each arm.



## Going up stairs with crutches

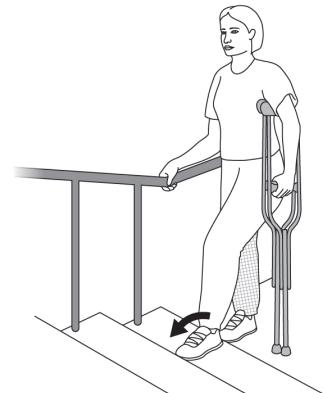
To go up stairs, always have the good leg step up first. Then do one step at a time.

Start by holding both crutches under the arm that is away from the handrail. Use your other hand to hold the handrail.



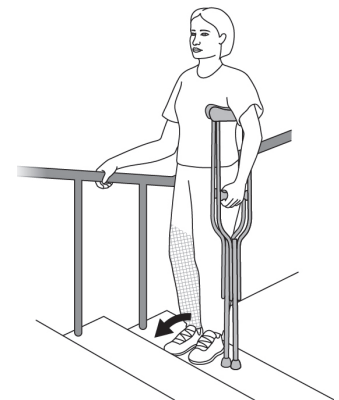
Step up with your good leg by putting weight on the handrail and crutches.

Then move the crutches and injured leg onto the same step.



**Follow your doctor's instructions about how much weight to put on your injured leg.**

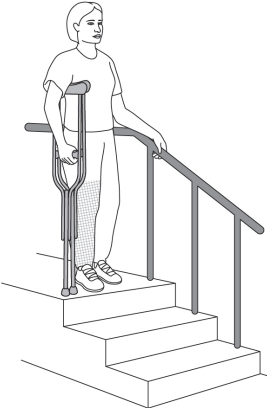
Move your hand up the railing and repeat this for each step.



# Going down stairs with crutches

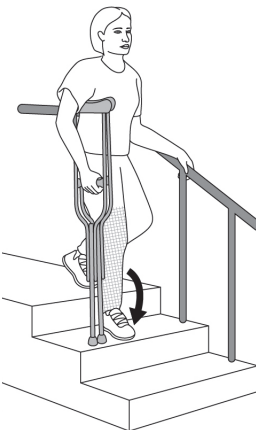
To go down stairs, always have the injured or operated leg and crutches go down first.

Start by holding both crutches under the arm that is away from the handrail. Use your other hand to hold the handrail.

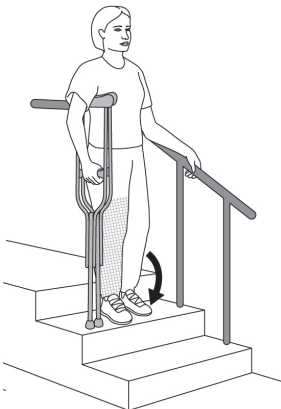


Put the crutches and then the injured leg carefully down to the first step. **Follow your doctor's instructions about how much weight to put on your injured leg.** Hold the handrail at all times.

Next step down with your good leg down to the same step.



Move your hand down to the railing and repeat.



Move your hand down to the railing and repeat.

Call your doctor at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have any questions or problems.  
For more information visit our website at [www.uhn.ca](http://www.uhn.ca)





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