

AVOIDING DISCOMFORT AND MANAGING PAIN

Keeping people with a hip fracture comfortable and out of pain improves recovery and avoids complications in the short, medium and longer term

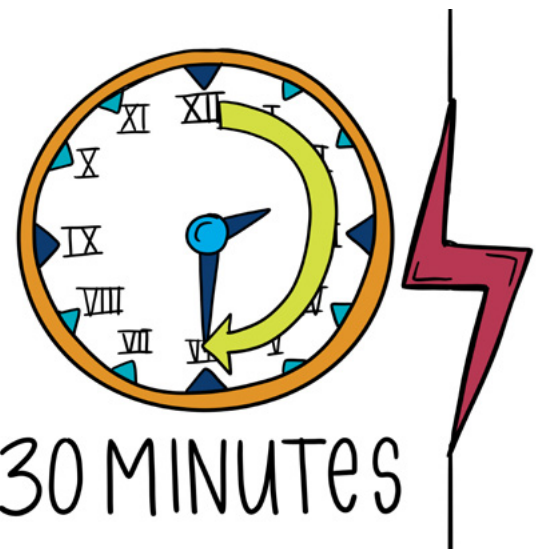


Someone you care about has suffered a broken hip and you may have suddenly found yourself needing to learn a lot very quickly.

- While the injury is being examined, and treatment is being planned, it is important to keep patients comfortable and out of pain. This will reduce the risk of complications before and after surgery
- A local injection in the groin called a “nerve block” can reduce pain by numbing the leg
- The nerve block can be given in the emergency department and will provide relief for several hours
- Pain relief ranges from simple paracetamol through to morphine-like painkillers
- After surgery, avoiding discomfort allows the person with the hip fracture to start moving again
- Medication is available after the operation so early standing and stepping is not too uncomfortable
- Some medications can cause constipation so the person with the fracture may also need bowel medicines to manage this
- People with an existing problem with their memory and thinking (like dementia) may express their discomfort or pain in unusual ways. Some examples of unusual behaviours are being aggressive or very withdrawn

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hip fracture patients in Australia and New Zealand received pain relief from the ambulance officers or in the first 30 minutes after arriving at hospital



30 MINUTES

As someone who knows the patient well, you may be the first person to notice a change in their behaviour

You may feel like you want to do something practical to help the patient in their recovery. Here are some practical tips you might be able to take to help the person you care for be comfortable after their broken hip



Talk to them:

- Check they are comfortable, especially when moving
- Check with them about constipation. As a trusted person they may tell you things they won't tell the health professionals
- Reassure them that medication is available to help them be comfortable while all the tests and examinations are being done and with standing and walking again after surgery



Share any personal beliefs about injury and illness with the health professionals:

- Let the health professionals know about any preferences for things that provide comfort such as music, a warm blanket, a hot drink
- If they are stoic and often choose to avoid "making a fuss" which may mean they are less likely to admit to any discomfort



The health professionals are there to help so let them know:

- If the person you care for needs additional medicine to be comfortable
- If they have had a reaction to any medicines in the past
- If they have any problems with memory or communication that affects how they respond to discomfort or injury
- If they appear more confused or sleepy than normal
- If English is not their preferred language for their medical care
- A few key words in the language preferred by the patient that may help them communicate with staff when you are not there

Listed below are suggested points for discussion about avoiding discomfort and managing pain. If you would like more information, place a tick in the box to remind you to discuss that point with the health care team.

Tick one box for each statement below	I need more information	I have enough information
I feel confident I understand the different ways the person I care for will be kept comfortable before and after their operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel confident I know who to contact if the person I care for is unbearably uncomfortable while in hospital or after leaving hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given enough information about how to keep track of the dose and timing of medications after leaving hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Information and data sourced from: 1. ANZHFR Hip Fracture Care Guide: My Hip Fracture Information and Individual Care Plan 2. Australia New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry 2022 Annual Report 3. Australian and New Zealand Guideline for hip fracture care – Improving outcomes in hip fracture management of adults <https://anzhfr.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1164/2021/12/ANZ-Guideline-for-Hip-Fracture-Care.pdf> Accessed 1st September 2022 4. Royal College of Physicians National Falls and Fragility Audit Programme – A guide for family and carers. <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/hip-fracture-carers-guide> Accessed 1st September 2022

