

Guided growth surgery in children

ORTHOPAEDIC FACT SHEET 40

Children's bones grow from the ends. Occasionally a growth problem may occur. Parents might notice that their child's legs are not straight, with abnormal bowing or knock knees affecting one or both legs (**Figure 1**). Guided growth surgery may be helpful to correct these problems.

Through a small incision, and with the child under general anaesthetic, a small metal device called an eight-Plate (**Figure 2**) is placed across the growth area of the bone. This temporarily slows the growth at that site (**Figure 3**). With time and natural growth (around three months to one year) the bone grows straight.

A cast is not required after surgery. The child generally goes home on the same day and may need crutches for a few days. Sports can be played after a few weeks once the wound is healed.

An orthopaedic surgeon will monitor the child's progress by examination and the occasional X-ray. Because the eight-Plate is altering growth, regular follow-up at the clinic is important. Failure to attend could result in further problems. The eight-Plate will be removed once the problem is corrected.

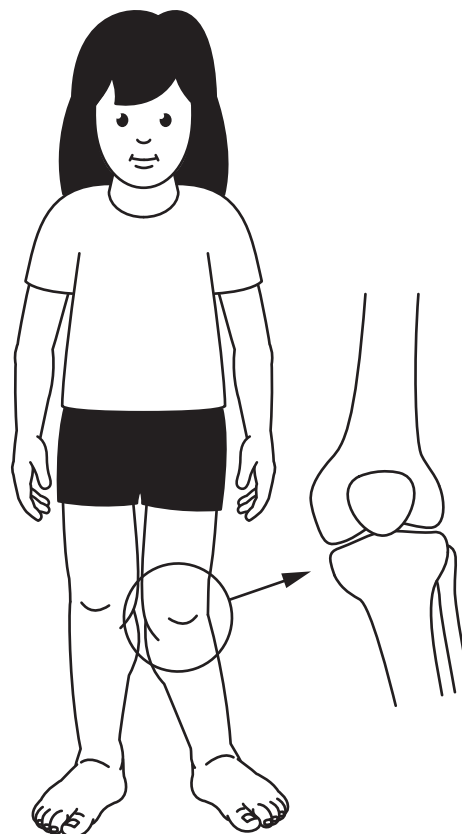


Figure 1. Growth problem affecting the left leg

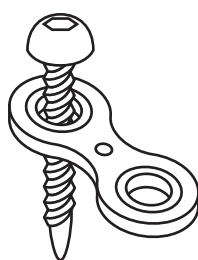


Figure 2. eight-Plate

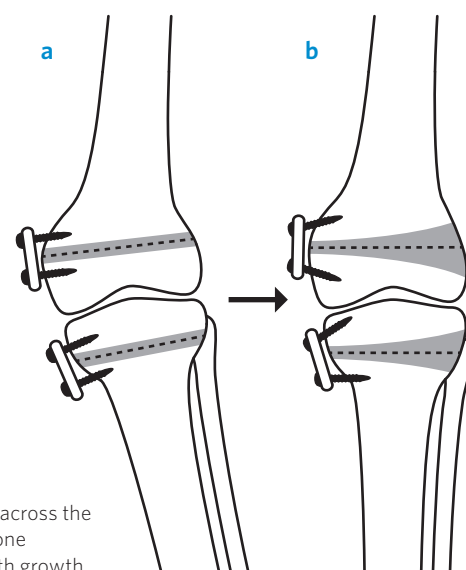


Figure 3. (a) eight-Plate across the growth area of bone
(b) bone straightens with growth