

# Physical Therapy Following the Insertion of a PRECICE Ellipse® Nail



Shriners Hospitals  
for Children®—St. Louis

## What is Physical Therapy and why do I need it?

Initially after surgery, you may feel afraid to move your leg, and will probably have some difficulty standing and walking. Your physical therapist will help you get comfortable and moving again. As you start your lengthening process, your muscles will tighten and weaken somewhat. This is to be expected. The goals of Physical Therapy are to help keep your muscles flexible and strong, and to help you stay as active as possible throughout your lengthening.

## When do I start?

Physical Therapy will begin the day after surgery. You will attend PT in our Rehab Dept. **twice on Thursday, and once or twice on Friday**, depending on your progress. Most patients are able to go home the Friday following surgery.

## No way, I can NOT do this!

At first, you may need help moving your leg in bed, standing, and taking a few steps with a walker or crutches. After surgery, **it is very important that you avoid placing any weight through your surgical leg when standing and walking**. Your PT will teach you how to do this! You will likely require a wheelchair to get to PT. This is perfectly normal and you will work to regain your independence with PT! Most patients are up and walking with a walker or crutches by the time they leave the hospital, using a wheelchair only for long distances outside of the home.

## Ok, maybe I can. But HOW?

While in PT, you will work on strengthening and stretching exercises and practice moving in bed, standing, and walking. Your PT will provide an exercise program designed specifically for you and will make recommendations on the best assistive device for you. (Walker, crutches.) If able, your therapist will teach you how to walk up and down a small flight of stairs in the PT dept as well. Things may go slowly the first day or two, but it **will** get easier!

## Where to Call with Questions or Concerns

**Tracy Przybylski, PT**  
Physical Therapist

Limb Reconstruction & Lengthening  
314-432-3600, ext. 1138

**Jill Hahn, Clinical Coordinator**  
Limb Reconstruction & Lengthening  
314-692-6443

## Who can come with me?

Your parent/caretaker will be encouraged to attend and participate during physical therapy sessions in order to learn how to assist you with your exercise program and mobility once you go home. On occasion, parents may be asked to step out during a particular session if it is felt you will have a more positive rehab experience on your own.



## Yay! It's time to go home!

Before you leave the hospital, your PT will ask your parent/caregiver to demonstrate that they are comfortable assisting you with your **home exercise program (HEP)**, application of your knee brace, and supervising you while walking. You will be given a written copy of your HEP and bracewear instructions, including your therapist's contact information in case you have any questions after you leave. **It is very important that you continue to perform your HEP twice every day** (once on days you attend Outpatient PT) **and follow all therapy instructions!**

Prior to leaving the hospital, you will be required to have appointments scheduled for **Outpatient Physical Therapy, 3 visits per week, beginning the week you return home**. If you live close to the hospital, you will attend PT in our Rehab Dept, as you did after surgery. If you live further away, you may attend with your choice of PT, closer to your home. We will contact your Outpatient PT to discuss your therapy goals and treatment plan prior to your first visit with him/her.

**Work on your HEP... every single day! It's very important that you continue to stretch, strengthen, wear your knee brace, and continue to walk without placing weight through your surgical leg, in order for your leg to lengthen and heal properly.** Failure to follow instructions may result in excessive joint stiffness or delayed bone healing, causing a delay in your lengthening process! Please call our PT dept right away if you have any concerns about your progress!

For more information on our Limb Length Discrepancy services, visit <http://stlshrinerslimbreconstruction.com>