



## **DR. LUBER - CRUTCH OR WALKER USE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Make sure your crutches fit properly:**

- a) The tops of the crutches should be two or three fingers-widths below your armpit. Do not rest your weight on the axillary (top) pads - the pressure on nerves and blood vessels in the armpits can cause "crutch palsy," a numbness in the arms and hands.
- b) Your wrists should be straight and the elbows should be bent 25-30°. The weight should be on your palms on the handgrips.
- c) You should wear well-fitting low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles.

### **Using your crutches:**

- a) Support your weight on the hand grips. Elbows should have a slight bend.
- b) Squeeze the top (axillary) pad between your upper arms and ribcage. This provides stability and balance. Do not rest your weight on the top pads.
- c) Move the crutches about 12 inches ahead of the good leg and about 6 inches to each side. Move the injured/bad leg forward with the crutches. The amount of weight allowed through the leg will be discussed with you by your therapist. Then step with the good leg up to or slightly ahead of the crutches. With your weight on the good leg, move the crutches ahead as before.

### **Weight Bearing:**

- Non Weight Bearing on affected extremity
- Partial Weight Bearing - You may allow your toe to touch the surface/ground for balance ONLY. Not for weight bearing purposes.
- Weight Bearing as Tolerated - You may use a cane or crutch for balance.

### **Sitting in a chair:**

- a) Approach the chair, turn and slowly back up until you can feel the edge of the chair on the back of your leg. Keep the bad leg forward.
- b) Remove the crutches from under the arms and hold both hand grips with the hand on the "bad leg" side. Place them slightly forward of the body.
- c) Putting weight down through the hand grips, reach the other hand back to the chair for support. Bend the good knee and lower yourself onto the chair. Keep the bad leg forward. A high chair with arms is best.

### **Getting up from a chair:**

- a) Place both handgrips into the hand on the "bad leg" side. Move out toward the edge of the chair.
- b) Keep the good leg bent and under the body with the bad leg out in front.
- c) Put pressure through the hands on the grips and the hand on the chair to push up into standing. When standing and balanced, move one crutch to each hand then position under arms ready for walking.

### **Going up stairs:**

- a) Face the stairs and place the crutches close to the first step.
- b) Push on the handgrips of the crutches, lifting the good leg up on to the first step up. The good leg goes up a level before the crutches and the bad leg.
- c) Straighten the back and the good knee to lift the bad leg and the crutches up onto the step with the good leg. Remember your weight bearing status.
- d) Walk up slowly. Go one step at a time. Check your balance on each step before moving to the next step. Keep your body weight forward - don't lean back.

### **Going down stairs:**

- a) Stand with the toes of the stronger leg placed close to the edge of the step.
- b) Lower the bad leg and the crutches to the step below. Remember weight-bearing status. Bend the hip and the knee of the good leg to help with your balance.
- c) Lean on the crutches taking the weight on your hands and move the foot of the good leg down to the step with the crutches and the bad leg.
- d) Go down slowly. Check your balance with each step down. Keep your body straight - don't lean too far forward.
- e) If you lose your balance - lean backwards, stick the crutches out into the air and sit down. (That is better than falling forward.) You can go the rest of the way on your bottom.

### **THE GOOD LEG GOES UP FIRST; THE BAD LEG COMES DOWN FIRST.**

\* If there is a strong, solid hand rail, you may find it easier to use it in place of one of the crutches. Simply hold both crutches under the arm on one side with your hand holding both hand grips. Make sure you have someone to assist if you are in any doubt.

### **Negotiating a slope:**

- a) Go up with the good leg first and then the bad leg.
- b) Down - crutches and bad leg first. Bring good leg only to the level of the crutches. Don't overstep.

### **Going through doorways: (attempt only if you are very steady on crutches.)**

- a) Stand facing the door and slightly at an angle to it so the door will clear your feet as it opens. Turn the doorknob with one hand while supporting yourself on the crutch with the other hand. The crutch remains under the arm of the hand on the doorknob.
- b) As the door opens, quickly grasp the crutch with the hand that opened the door and place the crutch tip against the door to keep it open. Do not move until the door has been stopped by the crutch.
- c) Proceed through the door. You may have to repeat the above two or three times if the door is heavy or awkward. Do not move until the door has been stopped each time by your crutch.

Thank you for following the above instructions. If you have any questions, please call my office. The receptionist will put you in touch with my nurse or me.

- *Kurre T. Lubber, MD*