CLINICAL SKILLS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICINE

APPLICATION OF A THOMAS SPLINT

Importance

Femoral shaft fractures become painfully displaced and shortened due to the pull of the quadriceps and hamstrings. Skin traction using adhesive strapping provides a rapid means of reducing pain and local fluid loss.

Key skill

By the end of this session, you should be *confident* and *competent* in the following:

Application of a Thomas splint	Indications for use	Method of application.

Procedure routine:

1. Assemble required kit	Commercial traction set: tapes, cords etc.
2.Sizing of the Thomas splint	Ring size measured at very top of thigh Uninjured leg can be used Ideally also have size above/ below.
3. Application of the skin traction	Explain procedure to patient Apply adhesive tape to medial side of leg Apply tape to lateral side of leg Ensure tapes go as far up leg as possible Secure leg by holding spreader bar at foot Secure tapes with encircling crepe bandage.
4. Application of Thomas splint to leg	Traction applied with spreader bar Splint pushed up leg to perineum Test size by passing finger beneath ring.
5. Application of supporting sling	For example, double Tubigrip Padding of sling beneath the fracture zone.
6. Application & securing of traction	Using spatula to take up the slack.
7. Bandaging of the limb to the splint	Trying to keep slight flexion over # site Using crepe bandages Place pillow under leg.