

Simple Toe Injury Advice

Fractures of the toe are most frequently caused by a crush injury or by stubbing your toe.

Your toe injury may have been assessed by an experienced nurse – so that you do not need to wait to be seen – or you will have been examined by a Doctor or Emergency Nurse Practitioner.

The treatment for your injury is the same whether or not the toe is fractured (broken) which is why you may not have had an x-ray of your toes.

Your toes may have been strapped together for comfort (neighbour strapping), but if you find this does not help you can take it off. If you need to, this strapping can be used for up to 2 weeks.

You may find wearing a rigid-sole shoe helpful as it will limit movement at the toe joints.

The following advice should help your injury:

Things you should do	Things you should not do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest for the first 48 hours after your injury - rest allows the body to begin the process of healing. • Keep your foot raised (elevated) higher than your hip to help prevent/reduce the swelling • Use ice packs (frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do), for 15-20 minutes every 2 hours if you can this will help to bring down the swelling and help to make it less painful • Take the recommended medication to relieve the pain – this can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle • You should wiggle your toes as much as you can to prevent them getting stiff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use ice packs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ over areas of skin that are in poor condition ○ if you have poor sensation to cold ○ if you know you have poor circulation. • Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn. • Do not leave ice on while asleep

Remember

You can expect your toe to be painful for several weeks, and it may remain swollen and bruised for some time as well. As your pain subsides, however, you can begin to bear weight as you are comfortable. During this time, it may be helpful to wear a wider than normal shoe.

However if it becomes more painful, rest with it up higher than your hip for at least 30mins and take some painkillers – see over for advice on what to take.

If this does not improve things **at all** then contact your GP or the ED/MIU department where you were treated.

What should I take for Pain?

Painkillers, such as **Paracetamol**, are useful to ease pain, but it is best to take them regularly for a few days or so rather than every now and then. They can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you do not take any other product containing Paracetamol. If Paracetamol does not help at all despite taking the recommended dose then try changing to Ibuprofen 400 mg three times a day. You can also take both drugs – speak to a pharmacist about the best way to do this. If you have been advised not to take Ibuprofen in the past or are on any blood thinning tablets then avoid Ibuprofen.

With all medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.

Anti-inflammatory painkillers can also be used. These relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling, however if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you should not use them. Side effects sometimes occur with anti-inflammatory painkillers - stomach pain and bleeding from the stomach, are the most serious. Some people with asthma, high blood pressure, kidney failure or heart failure may not be able to take them either. You can buy Ibuprofen at pharmacies both in tablet and gel form. There is less risk of side-effects with the gel, however, the amount of the drug that gets into the bloodstream is much less than with tablets and it is important that you use enough gel.

If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit (MIU):

Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056

Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU: 01443 802353 or 802349

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

It may take some time for your toe to improve - between 4-6 weeks in some cases – but if your symptoms haven't improved **at all** after 10 days, then you should seek medical advice.

If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.

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References: <http://patient.info/doctor/foot-fractures-and-dislocations>

**"This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**