

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 at triage - so that you don't need to wait to be seen – or you will have been examined by an 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 doesn't 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.

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant
Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287**

Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):

Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056

Nevil Hall Hospital: 01873 732073

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

The following advice should help your injury:

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't 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 wider than normal shoes. 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 doesn't improve things at all then contact your GP or the MIU department where you were treated.

What should I take for Pain?

<p>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.</p> <p>They can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you don't take any other product containing Paracetamol. If Paracetamol doesn't 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</p>	<p>Anti-inflammatory painkillers, like Ibuprofen 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 shouldn't use them.</p> <p>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.</p>
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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 the medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.

You can buy Ibuprofen at pharmacies both in tablet and gel form. There is less risk of side-effects with 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.

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 Minor Injury Unit where you were seen.

References: Patient info: Foot Fractures and Dislocations. Toe fractures; information

Patient info: Broken Toe: Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment

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