

# Toe injury

An injured toe is a common injury, usually caused by dropping a heavy object on the foot or by stubbing the toe against something. It may be badly bruised or fractured (broken). On examination of your toe, if there is no deformity, your toe might not be x-rayed as an x-ray will not change the treatment of your injury. Injured toes are extremely painful and will often be swollen, red and bruised.

## Treatment

- The preferred treatment is to strap the injured toe to the one next to it (neighbour strapping). The healthy toe will act as a splint while your toe heals. This is not always required and can be discontinued when your injured toe feels comfortable.
- You can change the strapping at home if it becomes wet or dirty. The strapping can stay in place for as long as you feel necessary.
- The pain is worse in the first few weeks but you may experience some discomfort for longer, as it will take up to 12 weeks for your injury to heal if there is a fracture. If it is a soft tissue injury, it will heal within 2-3 weeks.
- No follow up appointment will be required, except if you have broken your big toe. A big toe fracture is normally reviewed by the Orthopaedic Team as they are important in maintaining our balance. The Orthopaedic team will see you in fracture clinic.
- You can begin normal activity once the swelling has gone down and you are able to comfortably wear a protective shoe.
- You need to be able to perform an emergency stop safely and have good pedal control before you can drive again.
- You may resume contact and impact sports from 12 weeks after the injury. It is not uncommon to notice initial pain and swelling on return to sport but this should settle over time.

## During the first three days

- Rest the toe by not walking or standing for too long. You may find it more comfortable to walk on your heel for the first few days.

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- Ice will help reduce swelling and help with the pain. Place an ice pack wrapped in a towel over the toe for 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours for the first few days.
  - Elevate the foot as much as possible in the first two days as this will help reduce pain and swelling.
  - To help with the pain, take over the counter painkillers, such as, paracetamol and/or ibuprofen once discussed with the Clinician or Pharmacist.
  - Wear a supportive shoe to protect the toe and do not squash or bend the toe.

### **When to go to hospital**

Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department if:

- Your toes are cold and numb or tingling
- The skin on your toe has turned blue

**Please contact your GP or NHS111 for any queries or concerns.**

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net)

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