

Care after a minor chest injury

Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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What do I need to do after a minor chest injury?

Pain after a chest injury can last several weeks. During this time it is important to get air into the deepest parts of your lungs. This will help to prevent you from developing a chest infection such as pneumonia.

For the first 2 weeks:

- use regular painkillers. Take paracetamol and/or ibuprofen regularly to make breathing and coughing easier.
- keep mobile. Keep moving around. Do not stay in bed.
- do breathing exercises. Take 5 to 10 deep breaths to fill your lungs with as much air as possible every hour.
- cough. Coughing is important to clear your lungs. To make it less painful to cough, try pressing firmly over the sore part of your chest while you cough.
- if you smoke, get help to stop smoking. The nicotine and carbon monoxide from cigarettes can decrease oxygen levels and greatly increase the risk of heart-related problems after injury. Smoking changes your immune system and can delay healing, increasing the risk of infection.
- keep your shoulders moving unless told otherwise.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What should I avoid doing?

Do not...

- strap or bandage your ribs. In the past this was a common treatment for broken ribs, but we now know this is harmful. Bruised or broken ribs heal better by themselves.
- do any sport or activity that makes your pain worse.
- lift heavy objects.

Why didn't I have a chest X-ray?

Broken ribs are difficult to see on an X-ray. The treatment for bruised and broken ribs is the same.

How long before I can get back to normal activities?

Broken ribs or breastbone takes 2 to 3 months to heal properly. During this time you may not be able to do some sports or physical activities. Let your pain guide you on what you can do.

What problems do I need to look out for?

- If you have a high temperature, shivers or cough up any green or yellow secretions, you may have developed a chest infection. Contact your GP or the NHS helpline on 111.
- If you have sudden shortness of breath you may have developed a chest infection or punctured a lung. You will need to come back to the Emergency Department to be assessed.

Contact details

Minor Injuries Unit, Emergency Department, Leicester Royal Infirmary

Switchboard Tel: 0300 303 1573 (ext 0052 or 0054)

Further information

For help and support with giving up smoking speak to your GP or visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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