

If you require further advice or are not sure then please contact your GP or phone 111

Rib Injury

This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona w innych językach/formatach.

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Rib Injuries

The doctor/practitioner that you have seen has diagnosed that you have injured your rib(s).

They usually take several weeks to heal. If the rib is broken this can be 6 to 8 weeks.

Pain will be worse as you breathe in. This is because the rib cage moves with breathing.

It's important to follow the breathing exercises outlined later in this leaflet to avoid getting a chest infection

We do not usually Xray chests to look for rib fractures:

- Fractures can be difficult to see
- Xrays carry a radiation risk

If we do perform an Xray it is to look at the lungs underlying the rib cage.

How to help yourself

- You need to take regular painkillers, at least for the first couple of weeks.
- If you wait until the pain is bad the pain killer will be less effective. **Regular is better.**
- You can hold an ice pack e.g. frozen peas in a tea towel, to the affected ribs regularly as this is a good pain killer and will help reduce any swelling.
- Breathe normally and cough when you need.
- Sleeping more upright may be more comfortable.
- Do not lie down or stay still for long periods of time.
- Do not lift heavy objects.
- Do not drive until you can do an emergency stop pain-free.

Breathing exercises

Repeat hourly throughout the day.

- Loosen any tight clothing
- Lie comfortably on your uninjured side
- Take as deep a breath as you can
- Do this 3 times and then rest for a few minutes
- Repeat

If lying down is uncomfortable, do the following sitting in a chair:

- Wrap a towel or sheet around your chest, cross over at the front, and pull to support your ribs
- Do the breathing exercises above.