



Rib Fracture Advice

A rib fracture is a break or crack in a rib. These don't always show on x-ray, but can be diagnosed on examination. You may have one or more fractures; these will heal on their own in about 4 to 6 weeks. It is important to follow the advice below to avoid complications.

Treatment

There are no specific treatments for rib fractures and chest wall bruising. The most important thing you can do is to try and avoid developing a chest infection while your injury heals. There are things that you can do when you have been discharged from hospital to prevent this from happening

Do

- Take regular pain relief as advised by the doctor - this will help you feel able to take deep breaths and cough.
- Keep mobile (e.g. walking) - this is the most effective way to help you take deep breaths and clear any sputum.
- Cough when you need to and support your chest when coughing- you can support the painful area with a pillow.
- Most importantly - limit /stop smoking.
- Keep your shoulders moving with light everyday activities that you can manage without making your pain worse (unless you are told not to because of other injuries).

Don't

- Stay lying down or still for long periods of time.
- Lift, pull or push anything which makes the pain worse.

Contact your own doctor if

- Your sputum becomes discoloured.
- You become unwell with a temperature.

Seek medical help immediately if:

- Ongoing or worsening shortness of breath.
- Increasing chest pain.
- Your pain gets worse and is not controlled with pain-killers.