

Broken or Bruised ribs

Bruised or broken ribs can be very painful but usually heal by themselves.

Things you can do yourself

Broken or bruised ribs heal in the same way and usually get better by themselves within 3 to 6 weeks.

There are some things you can do to help ease pain and speed up healing:

Do

- ✓ Take painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (or as prescribed by your clinician)- avoid taking ibuprofen for 48 hours after your injury as it may slow down healing
- ✓ Hold an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas in a tea towel to the affected ribs regularly in the first few days to bring down swelling
- ✓ Rest and take time off work if you need to
- ✓ Breathing exercises to prevent chest infection (see next page)
- ✓ Try to sleep more upright for the first few nights.

Don't

- ✗ Do not wrap a bandage tightly around your chest to stop your lungs from expanding properly
- ✗ Do not lie down or stay still for a long time
- ✗ Do not strain yourself by lifting heavy objects
- ✗ Do not play any sports or do any exercise that makes your pain worse
- ✗ Do not smoke- stopping smoking may also help your recovery.

Get advice from 111 now if:

- Your pain has not improved within a few days
- You're coughing up yellow or green mucus
- You have a very high temperature, or you feel hot and shivery.

You might need stronger painkillers or have a chest infection that needs antibiotics.

111 will let you know what to do. They can arrange a phone call from a nurse or doctor if you need one.

Call 999 or go to A&E if you:

- Have shortness of breath that's getting worse
- Have chest pain that's getting worse
- Have pain in your tummy or shoulder
- Are coughing up blood.

Breathing Exercises

- **Breathing control is gentle breathing for 1 minute.**

Breathe in and out through the nose if you can. Feel your belly rise as you breathe in and sink as you breathe out. The breath should be gentle.

- **Thoracic Expansions (Bigger breaths)**

Breathe in and out through your nose - take a slow, large breath in, hold for the count of 3 if you can and breathe out gently. The cycle of breathing should be controlled, try to keep the noise of the air passing in and out silent. **Repeat up to 3 times only.**

- **Forced Expiratory Technique**

It is known as a **Huff**. Breathe in through your nose (as if smelling a rose) then with your mouth open force the air out (as if trying to steam up a mirror). **2 slow, long huffs and then 2 fast short huffs.**

- **Shoulder raises (upwards)**

Try moving your arms (together or separately) in front of your body, as if reaching up to your head.



- **Side bends**

In sitting (or standing), gently allow your trunk to bend over to one side, return to the start position before bending to the other side.



- **Shoulder raises (sideways)**

Try moving your arms (together or separately) out to the side, as if raising your arms up to your head.



- **Coughing/clearing phlegm**

Place your arm around your body as if your were hugging yourself (see picture). This makes the action of coughing more comfortable. Try to avoid excessive coughing.



- **Trunk rotations.**

In sitting, place your arms across your body and gently turn your upper body to one side, return to the start position and the turn to the other side.



Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

The team are available to help with any concerns, complaints or questions you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059.

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net