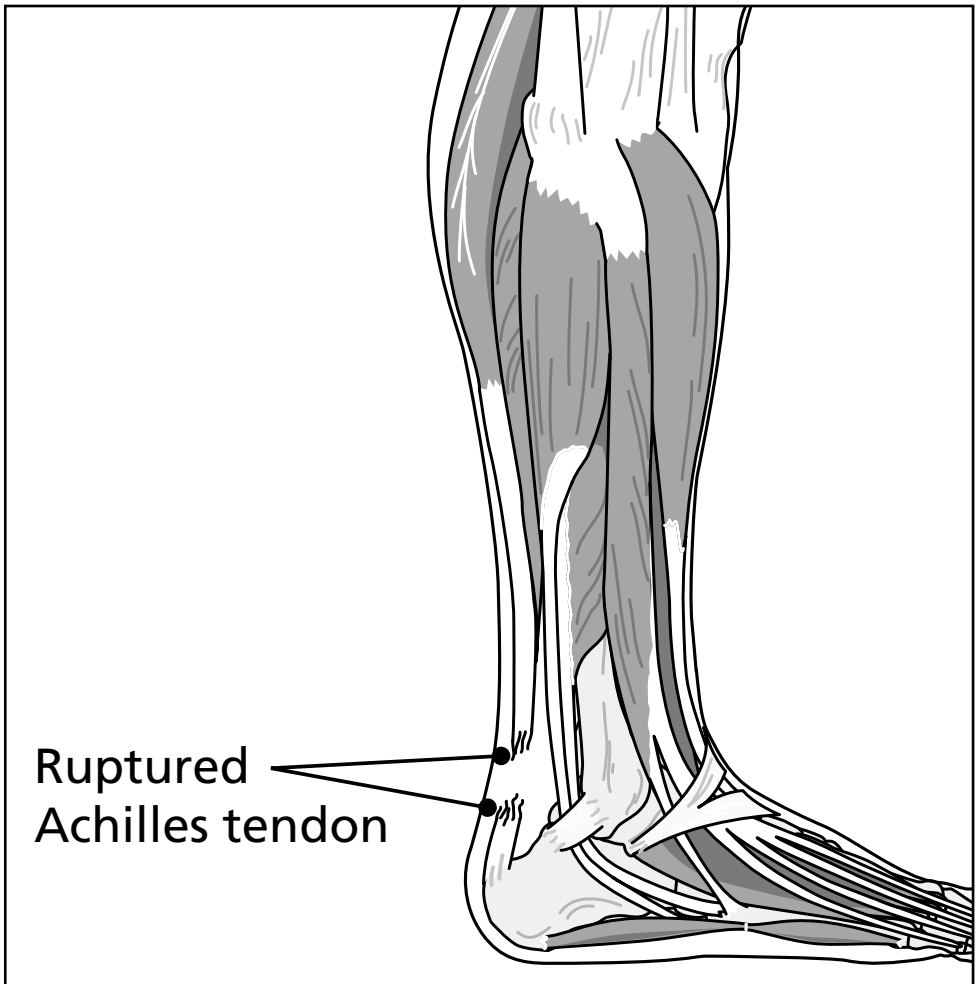


Emergency Department  
**Achilles tendon  
rupture advice**  
Information for patients



## What is a ruptured Achilles tendon?

The Achilles tendon is a strong band of connective tissue that joins your calf muscle to your heel. It is particularly important when you are walking, pointing your toes and standing on tiptoe. It can rupture unexpectedly or during sudden calf muscle activity, such as running or sprinting.

## What are the symptoms?

- immediate sharp pain in the back of your ankle
- inability to rise up on your toes or push off from your foot
- difficulty in walking.

## How is it treated?

- A temporary plaster cast will have been applied to your leg to protect your injured tendon until we decide on the best treatment for you.
- As you must not stand on or put any weight through the plaster cast, you will have been given crutches or a walking frame to help you get around.

The options for treatment (plaster cast or operation) usually depend on how bad the damage is to the tendon. We can assess this by looking at your tendon using an ultrasound scan.

## Ultrasound scan and follow-up

An ultrasound scan uses high frequency sound waves (which cannot be heard by the human ear) to create pictures of the structures inside your body. These sound waves are able to pass through liquid and soft tissues, but not solid objects. When the ultrasound waves hit a dense or solid object, such as a tendon, they bounce back as an echo and are turned into pictures which can be seen on a monitor.

## **What happens during the ultrasound scan?**

- Your plaster cast will be removed in the X-ray department before the scan is carried out.
- A hand-held probe, that looks like a thick, blunt pen will be placed onto your skin, over your injured ankle. The probe is connected to a computer and a monitor.
- A lubricating gel will be put on to your skin so that the probe is able to move smoothly, and to make sure that there is continuous contact with your body.
- Pulses of ultrasound will be sent from the probe, through your skin and into your body. These then bounce back and a computer turns them into pictures which are displayed on a monitor.
- The scan is painless and, as sound waves are used rather than radiation, the procedure is understood to be completely safe.

You will also be seen by the Trauma Clinic after your scan to discuss the results of the ultrasound scan.

We have arranged the following outpatient appointment(s) for you:

### **Trauma Outpatient Clinic appointment:**

Date .....

Time .....

### **Ultrasound scan**

Date .....

Time .....

## Painkillers

You can take painkillers such as paracetamol or a paracetamol and codeine mixture (e.g. co-codamol) as well as anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen. Paracetamol and ibuprofen tablets can be taken together. Please read the dosage instructions on the packets carefully.

## How to contact us

### **Emergency Department**

John Radcliffe Hospital

**Tel: 01865 220 224**

### **Emergency Department**

Horton Hospital

**Tel: 01295 229 412**

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **[PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk)**

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