

Emergency Department

Great Toe Injury

Information for patients



An injured great toe is a common injury, usually caused by dropping a heavy object on the foot or by stubbing the toe against something. It may be badly bruised or fractured (broken).

Will I need an X-ray ?

The clinician assessing you will arrange an X-ray after examining your toe, if they feel it is necessary.

How will it be treated?

You may be provided with a support for your foot, in the form of a removable orthopaedic Velcro shoe. Alternatively, you may be able to wear your own flat, enclosed shoes, depending on the type of injury to your toe. You can walk on your foot as much as your pain allows. You should gradually stop wearing the orthopaedic Velcro shoe over 3-5 weeks, as your pain settles.

If you have a wound on your toe it will have been cleaned and dressed appropriately. You will be prescribed a course of antibiotics to take, to help prevent an infection. You should arrange a follow-up with your GP's practice nurse in 2-3 days, for dressing change and wound review.

DIABETIC PATIENTS:

If you have a wound on your toe you will be prescribed a course of antibiotics to take and will be referred to the Podiatry team. The Podiatry team will contact you to arrange your follow-up.

How long does it take to get better?

Most great toe injuries heal without any problems. However, it may take several months for your symptoms to settle completely.

Swelling and pain relief

Injured toes are extremely painful and will often be swollen, red and bruised. The pain will be worse in the first few weeks, but you may experience some discomfort for longer, as it will take 4-6 weeks for your injury to heal if there is a fracture.

To help with the pain, take over the counter painkillers, such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen. Please read and follow the dosage instructions on the packet carefully.

Your foot may swell up after the injury. If this happens, keep your foot raised as much as possible; this will help reduce the swelling.

Pain and swelling can be eased by applying ice for approximately 15 minutes, 3-4 times a day. Wrap the ice in a damp towel to protect your skin.

Returning to sport

You can return to sports 6 weeks after your injury or as your pain allows.

Feedback

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. If you have any comments, concerns, or complaints about your experience of our service, please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service.

John Radcliffe Hospital

PALS Office
Level 2, Main entrance
John Radcliffe Hospital
Headley Way
Headington
Oxford, OX3 9DU

Tel: 01865 221 473

Email: PALS@ouh.nhs.uk

Horton General Hospital

PALS Office
Horton General Hospital
Oxford Road
Banbury, OX16 9AL

Tel: 01295 229 259

Email: PALS@ouh.nhs.uk

How to contact us

If you continue to have pain eight weeks after your injury, despite taking regular painkillers and caring for your injury as advised, or if at any point you are worried your injury is not healing, please contact the New Patient Clinic for an appointment.

New Patient (Fracture) Clinic at:

John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

Saturday and Sunday, 9.00am to 11.00am

Tel: **01865 220 217**

OR

Horton General Hospital, Banbury

Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 11.00am

Tel: **01295 229 606**

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 **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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