

Emergency Department

Lesser toe injury

Information for patients



A 'lesser toe' is any toe other than the big or 'great' toe. An injured 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?

When we examine your toe, if there is no deformity or wound, your toe will not be X-rayed, as an X-ray will not change the treatment of your injury.

How will it be treated?

Your injured toe has been strapped to the toe next to it, to act as a support splint whilst your toe heals. You can change the strapping at home if it becomes wet or dirty. The strapping can stay in place for as long as you feel you need it.

If you have a wound on your toe it will be cleaned and dressed appropriately. You may 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 a 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 service. The podiatry team will contact you to arrange your follow-up.

How long does it take to get better?

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

You may see a lump or feel a bump at the site where you injured your toe, for at least a year.

Swelling and pain relief

Injured toes are extremely painful and will often be swollen, red and bruised. The pain is 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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