

Emergency Department Discharge Advice



The Information Standard Certified Member

Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail pals@dchft.nhs.uk

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk

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Chest/Rib Injury

Falls or blows to the chest can lead to fractures of the ribs. This can be a painful condition.

X-rays are not always helpful as they often do not show rib fractures and do not change the treatment. X-rays are used if the doctor or nurse who examines you is concerned that there might be damage to the lung which is located underneath the ribs.

The pain may worsen after a few days due to your becoming more mobile.

The pain can last up to 6 weeks but will gradually subside.

Treatment:

- Take painkilling tablets regularly as advised
- Local heat may prove beneficial, for example a covered hot water bottle placed over the injury
- Do not smoke

Advice

Do breathing exercises regularly until the pain settles to prevent complications:

1. Stand with your back to the wall
2. Place your hand over the injured area
3. Take a deep breath in
4. Hold for 10 seconds, blow out and cough
5. Repeat 5 times an hour while you are awake.

If you develop any of the following symptoms return to your nearest Emergency Department at once:

- Shortness of breath or tightness in the chest
- Cough up any blood
- Cough up thick green coloured mucus or develop a high fever