

Chest Injuries

To see a self-help animation, scan the QR Code:



Chest injuries can be very painful. The pain you feel from breathing deeply and moving will improve as the ribs heal. This can take up to 6 weeks. During this time, you will be more at risk of a chest infection or pneumonia. Following this advice may help reduce this risk and should help your recovery.

STAGE	WHAT TO EXPECT...	WHAT TO DO...	SEEK HELP IF...	WHERE TO GET HELP
RED UP TO 2 WEEKS	Pain +++	Breathing exercises and cough	Feeling breathless →	A&E
		Take painkillers		
	Fatigue ++	Sleep upright	Uncontrolled severe pain →	A&E
		Gentle movement (avoid contact sports)	New productive cough →	A&E or GP
	Difficult to sleep	Eat & drink well	Constipation →	Pharmacy
	Difficult to wash and dress	Avoid heavy chores & driving	Home equipment needed →	GP/Community services
AMBER 2-4 WEEKS	Pain ++	Breathing exercises and cough	Seek help as shown in red box	Where to seek help as shown in red box
		Resume gentle exercise/walking		
	Fatigue ++	Take painkillers	Pain not improving →	Pharmacy or GP
	Easier to sleep	Gentle exercise (avoid contact sports)	Clicking in rib cage →	GP
	Easier to wash and dress	Eat & drink well	Unable to sleep →	Pharmacy or GP
		Gradual return to work, driving & chores		
GREEN 4-6 WEEKS	Pain +	Reduce painkillers	Seek help as shown in amber box	Where to seek help as shown in amber box
		Normal exercise as able		
	Fatigue +	Normal driving/chores as able	Pain lasts for more than 8 weeks →	Pharmacy or GP
		Return to work as able		
	Wash and dress	Gradual return to full sport	Advice needed to stop painkillers →	Pharmacy or GP

Chest injury: personalised care plan

Prompts for treating clinician



Originally developed by
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Include specific injury and instructions	
Co-morbidities management	
Medication specifics	
Contact details for services available	