

**Patient
Information**

Great (big) toe fracture or injury

Introduction

This leaflet provides advice for people who have injured their big toe.

Injury to the big toe is common and is usually caused by dropping something heavy onto your toe. It can also happen when the toe is stubbed against something hard.

Looking after your toe

It can be very painful when you have a big toe injury but the pain will ease after a couple of weeks.

Your toe may appear swollen, red or bruised and you may also have damage to the nail. It can take 4 to 6 weeks to heal if there is a fracture. If the bone is not out of place, it will usually heal well without any treatment.

How to reduce the pain

We suggest that you take regular pain relief medication such as paracetamol. Please follow the dosage instructions on the pack. Your pharmacist will be able to advise you about pain relief if you are taking other medications.

The use of ice packs for brief periods every few hours will help the pain to settle and reduce the swelling. For more information, please read our leaflet 'Ice and Heat treatment GHPI0659' at www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/ice-and-heat-treatment/

Strong, firm soled shoes or a heel weight-bearing shoe are helpful as they will hold your foot steady. This will help reduce pain and prevent the risk of further bumps.

Gentle exercise such as walking around the house can continue as the pain allows. Gradually increase your exercise until you are back to your usual daily activities.

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Department

**Emergency/
Trauma Services**

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Patient Information

Some patients with this injury will need a special shoe. If you are given this type of shoe, you will be advised to walk on your foot as normal. You will be given written instructions on how to care for your foot.

Before leaving the hospital, you will be asked to show staff that you are able to be mobile. If you find walking very difficult, staff will discuss other options with you. You may require a stick or crutches for a few days.

You should keep your foot elevated higher than your heart when resting. This will help reduce the swelling and discomfort.

Gentle exercise such as walking around the house can continue as the pain allows. Gradually increase your exercise until you are back to your usual daily activities.

Any X-rays taken will be reviewed by a specialist doctor. If there is any concern that there may be a more serious injury, you will be contacted. Please make sure that the receptionist has your up-to-date contact details.

Things you need to avoid

- For the first 6 weeks after your injury, you will need to check if you are insured to drive.
- Smoking will delay the healing process. If you would like help and support to stop smoking, please visit the websites at the end of this leaflet.
- Do not take part in sports until your injury is at least 6 weeks old. You should then gently increase your activities until you are back to your normal level of sport.

Contact information

Your toe will be painful for several days but you should notice an improvement after a week. If the pain does not settle with pain relief or the pain is increasing, please seek advice from your GP, NHS 111 your local Minor Injuries Unit or the Trauma Service.

NHS 111

Tel: 111

Patient Information

Trauma Service

Tel: 0300 422 5269

Monday to Friday, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Email: ghn-tr.glostrauma@nhs.net

Further information

For support and advice to stop smoking, please visit the following websites.

NHS - Better Health

Website: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire

Website: <https://hlsglos.org/stop-smoking/>

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>