

When to seek further medical attention from your GP:

If you find that you are becoming short of breath regularly.

If you develop a cold with a cough that produces yellow or green phlegm.

If you develop a high temperature.

Attend an Emergency Department urgently:

If you cough up blood.

If you severe sudden pain and difficulty breathing.

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URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE ADVICE SHEET



RIB / CHEST INJURY

Buxton Hospital (SK17 9NJ)

Ilkeston Hospital (DE7 8LN)

Ripley Hospital (DE5 3HE)

Whitworth Hospital (DE4 2JD)

Bruised, strained or broken ribs and other chest injuries

A chest X-ray will not have been taken. Isolated fractures often do not show up on a chest X-ray and the treatment is the same if a rib is fractured or not.

Although your injury may be very painful there is no specific treatment. Splinting is avoided as it can restrict the breathing and make complications, such as a chest infection, more likely.

The fracture or bruise usually heals in 4-6 weeks.

Importance of good pain relief:

- Please take simple pain relief such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen as per manufacturer's instructions. We may also have been issued with stronger pain relieving medication.
- Good pain relief during this time helps you to breathe and cough properly. Simply putting up with the pain is not a good idea. Shallow breathing and not coughing will increase your risk of developing a chest infection.
- Good pain relief is especially important for people who are more prone to chest infections such as smokers and people with chronic chest conditions.

Other care advice:

- Take ten slow, deep breaths every hour to make sure that the air sitting at the bottom of your lungs is freshened.
- Aim to alternate periods of rest with gentle activity over the next few weeks. Keeping mobile will assist in the drainage of normal lung secretions.
- Avoid straining or lifting for up to four weeks.
- When coughing or moving hold a rolled towel, cushion or your hand against the injured area. This acts as a support.
- Ensure that you sit in a well-supported position in a chair that is easy to arise from.
- When getting in cars put your bottom in first then swing your legs round.
- When getting up from lying down roll onto your unaffected side and sit up sideways, supporting your injured side with your hand and/or a towel.
- Try to cut down on smoking as it will make you cough more.
- Ensure your room is well ventilated.