

Seek a review with your GP urgently if you have uncontrolled pain (not able to take deep breaths or cough despite taking regular painkillers).

Advise the GP receptionist of your symptoms and anticipate a same day review to address your pain relief. If this is not achieved, you are at risk of developing a chest infection associated with only taking shallow breaths.

Follow-up care

You should not usually need any follow-up care. However, if you have queries or concerns when you get home, please contact your GP or NHS 111.

Further sources of information

NHS conditions: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rib-injuries/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net. This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Chest injury

Emergency Department

King's Mill Hospital

Mansfield Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Notts NG17 4JL
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 2789

Newark Hospital

Boundary Road
Newark
Notts NG24 4DE
Telephone: 01636 681681

Following your injury, you have been examined and it has been decided that you are fit to be allowed home. X-rays are often not needed because treatment for a single broken rib or bruising is usually the same.

What causes a chest injury?

Broken (fractured) or bruised ribs are usually caused by a fall or blow to the chest, or occasionally by severe coughing. They can be very painful but will normally improve within about six to eight weeks.

What are the symptoms?

A broken or bruised rib will feel very painful particularly when you breathe in, and you may feel you can only take shallow breaths. However, it is important to try and breathe normally to help clear mucus from your lungs and prevent chest infections. You may also have some swelling on your chest and bruising on the skin.

How can I care for my injury?

Your ribs should heal gradually over six to eight weeks. You can help by:

- Regularly taking painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, if you can take them (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).
- Holding an ice pack wrapped in a tea towel on your chest regularly during the first few days to reduce the pain and swelling.
- Resting regularly – you may have to take time off work especially if your work involves physical labour or the pain is severe.
- Keeping moving in between rest periods. Walking around and moving your shoulders occasionally can help with your breathing and help clear any mucus from your lungs.
- Holding a pillow against your chest if you need to cough.

What precautions should I take?

Do not:

- Wrap a bandage tightly around your chest as this will stop your lungs expanding properly.
- Take any cough medicine. Not clearing mucus from your lungs can lead to a serious chest infection.
- Lie down or stay still for long periods.
- Strain or lift heavy objects until you are feeling better, as you may injure yourself further and take longer to recover.

What should I look out for at home?

Call NHS 111 or return to the Emergency Department **immediately** if you get any of the following:

- Increasing shortness of breath.
- A high temperature (fever).
- Coughing up blood.
- Abdominal pain.
- Blood visible in your urine.