

Fracture care team

Information for patients

This leaflet gives you information and advice on managing a recent soft tissue injury or fracture.

- Healing:** Soft tissue injuries normally take up to six weeks to heal, but can last for up to three months. A fracture can take 6 to 12 weeks to unite (heal), but stiffness can last longer than this.
- Pain and swelling:** Take painkillers as prescribed. If you need further pain relief, contact your GP.
- Cold packs:** A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can give short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes every few hours ensuring the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.
- Rest:** Try to rest your injured limb for the first one to three days. However, it is important to maintain movement. This should not cause too much pain.
- Using your limb:** If you have been given a support, we encourage you to use this for comfort only. Try to wean out of the support as soon as possible. Otherwise, use your limb as pain allows.
- Driving:** To return to driving you must be able to do an emergency stop and ensure your injury does not affect your ability to drive.
- Flying:** There are no risks with flying following a soft tissue injury. However, if you have had a recent surgery or any significant illnesses we would encourage you to discuss this with your GP.
- Smoking:** Medical evidence suggests that smoking can prolong the time taken for an injury to heal. It is important that you consider this information in relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your injury will help ensure optimal recovery from your injury. For advice on stopping smoking and local support available, please go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree or discuss this with your GP.
- Cast/dressing care:** If you are wearing a cast for your injury, try not to let the cast get wet. You can use a waterproof cast or dressing protector. These can be purchased from a high street shop or online.