

On Discharge

Once you have been discharged from hospital, it is important that you follow up with your local doctor (GP).

Make an appointment to see your GP within three days of discharge.

Take your hospital discharge summary with you. This summary tells the GP what has happened, the tests done and what should happen with your ongoing care.

Please let your GP know:

- If you have a fever (Temperature of 37.5° C or higher).
- If you are not able to deep breathe or cough; your pain medication may need reviewing.
- If you are constipated.

If you develop any of the following symptoms, seek urgent medical review at the Hospital emergency department:

- Sudden onset of chest pain.
- Difficulty breathing and shortness of breath.



For more information, please contact

Trauma Department

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Image credit - Front page

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Image credit - Inner

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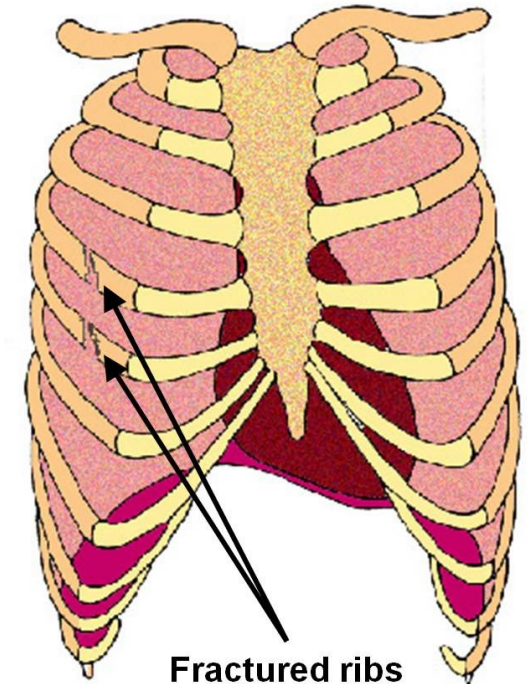
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Broken Ribs

What to do when I go home

Trauma Department
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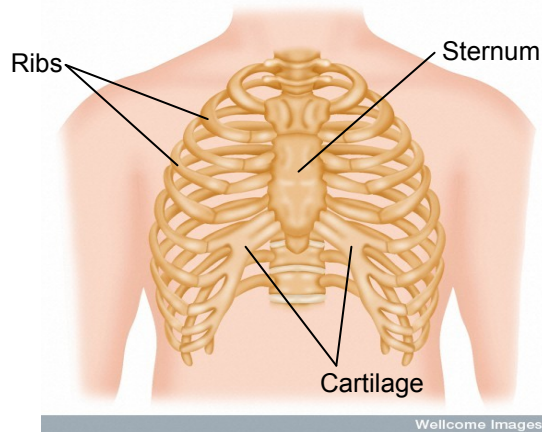


What do fractured ribs mean?

A rib fracture is a crack or break in one or more of your bones of the rib cage.

Your rib cage has two important functions

- Protects the important organs in your chest
- Helps you breath by using muscles to help your lungs expand.



Complications?

Common complications of broken ribs are:

- Pain
- Pneumonia / chest infection
- Collapsed lung (pneumothorax)
- Blood around the lung (haemothorax)

What about Pain Control?

Broken ribs can be painful and the pain often stops you from taking a deep breath and coughing. Unlike a broken bone in your arm or leg, it is important to keep your chest moving by deep breathing and coughing. Therefore pain control is **very important**

To help control pain it is important to:

- Take regular pain tablets prescribed by your doctor for up to two weeks post-discharge.
- Some pain medication can make you drowsy. Be careful if driving or operating machinery. Check with your doctor.
- Talk to your GP if the pain medication prescribed is not working adequately and the pain is getting worse.
- Pain medication may cause constipation, so drink plenty of water and eat a high fibre diet to help prevent this.
- When sleeping, you may want to use additional pillows to support the side with broken ribs.

Preventing Complications

To prevent you from developing pneumonia / chest infection, there are a few important things you must do:

- Deep breathing and coughing as prescribed by your physiotherapist to help ensure you clear any phlegm.
- Staying upright during the day will help with your breathing.
- Stand and walk as much as you can.
- Laying in bed all day could cause further complications.
- Try to walk regularly during the day as this will help with your lungs expanding.

- Stop smoking, ask for nicotine patches, also available at the chemist over the counter.

Breathing Exercises

- The physiotherapist will show you breathing exercises during your stay in hospital. It is important that you do them when you go home for at least two weeks.
- The physiotherapist / ward will give you a device such as below so that you can continue your breathing exercises at home.

Triflo

Aim to hold up two balls for at least three seconds.



Support

Use a towel to support your side when doing your breathing exercises, or when coughing (it hurts less).

