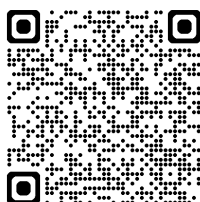


Broken Toes



Information for People Attending our Urgent Care Services

Telephone: 0300 125 6800 (Yate MIU) | 01275 546852 (North Somerset MIU) | 0300 124 6260 (Bristol MIU)



Scan the QR code to view the MIU page on the Sirona website.

Broken toes

Fractures (broken bones) to the small bones of the toes are the most common fracture of the foot. Common mechanisms are stubbing toes, abduction (splaying) of the toe, and crush injuries which can be caused by dropping things onto the foot or toes being run over or stood upon.

Fractured toes often have bruising, swelling, and pain. Broken bones bleed, so the area swells quickly. It eventually bruises as the blood travels through to the skin. Sometimes it is possible to see blood beneath the toenail. Fractures, sprains, strains, and bruising can all be painful and tender. The treatment for all of these is generally the same as long as the toe isn't misshaped and it isn't the great (big) toe.

When do I need an X-ray?

Toe injuries are X-rayed when a fracture and one or more of the following is suspected:

- There is a wound over the suspected fracture site (an open fracture).
- Bony tenderness to the metatarsal/s (the long bones in middle of the foot before the toes)
- Angulation or twisting of the toe/s.
- Shortening of the toe/s.
- It is the great toe that is injured.

We often suspect a toe fracture, but we decide not to perform an X-ray. This is because the treatment of the injury remains the same and therefore, an X-ray provides no benefit to the you or our clinical colleagues treating you. It also stops you from having unnecessary radiation from the X-ray that you do not need to be exposed to.

Treatment for broken toes

Toe fractures can take up to six weeks to fully heal. Resting and elevating your foot initially can help alleviate pain in the early stages and shorten recovery time.

- **Rest:** This means not putting excessive weight on the toe or standing for prolonged periods for the initial 24-48 hours.
- **Elevation:** When laid or sitting, elevate your foot higher than your hip to reduce swelling.
- **Pain relief:** It is important that pain relief is taken regularly to enable you to walk normally with your toe injury. A pharmacist can advise you what pain relief you can take, generally, paracetamol and ibuprofen taken regularly can help ease the pain. Please read and follow the dosage instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.

- **Support:** When mobilising, firm-soled shoes should be worn to reduce flexion (moving) at the toe joints, offer protection, and allow a more normal gait. It is rare to need crutches when you have a fractured toe/s. If needed, they will be provided by a clinician. The best treatment is to walk normally and gently on your injured foot.

- **Strapping:** Often, toe fractures are supported with buddy strapping, this is where one toe is strapped to an adjoining toe to offer protection and support. This can be helpful for up to three weeks after an injury. Your clinician can show you how to do this so you can repeat it at home when the strapping becomes ineffective, soiled, or wet.

How long does it take to get better?

With strapping and wearing stiff-soled shoes, walking when bearable, and the other advice offered above, most simple toe fractures should be healed within six to eight weeks. Sport can be resumed slowly and gently when normal walking and running can be performed without any pain or discomfort. If pain resumes, it is advised to rest it for a longer period of time.

When to seek help?

In normal circumstances, someone with a simple toe injury would not require seeking help again with this injury. However, if at any point the toe is not in normal alignment with the rest of the toes, the toe turns numb/tingly or blue/grey in colour (other than bruising), or you are unable to weight bear normally after simple pain relief and wearing supportive footwear, please return to an urgent care setting for review.

Contact us

Our minor injury and urgent treatment centres support the local community with urgent minor injuries and/or illnesses. They are led by our specialist emergency nurse practitioners, who are fully trained in both adult and pediatric care.

They are walk-in centres so you don't need an appointment or a referral – you can just arrive at the centre during opening hours. These centres are not appropriate for life-threatening injuries or serious illnesses.

South Bristol Urgent Treatment Centre

Minor injuries and illnesses
Open 8am-8pm, 7 days a week
South Bristol NHS Community Hospital
Hengrove Promenade
Hengrove, Bristol BS14 0DE
T: 0300 124 6260

Yate Minor Injury Unit

Minor injuries only
Open 8am-8pm, 7 days a week
Yate West Gate Centre
21 West Walk, Yate BS37 4AX
T: 0300 125 6800

Clevedon Minor Injury Unit

Minor injuries only
Open 8am-8pm, 7 days a week
North Somerset Community Hospital

Old Street, Clevedon BS21 6BS
T: 01275 546852

In an emergency:

Southmead Hospital – **0117 4145100**
Bristol Children's Hospital – **0117 3428666**
Royal United Hospital, Bath – **01225 824391**
Bristol Royal Infirmary – **0117 342 1000**
Weston General Hospital – **01934 636363**

**We want you and the people who help you to understand what we send.
If you need help with this letter or leaflet, please tell us.**

We can help with larger print, audio (a message to listen to), Easy read,
British Sign Language or this information in another language.



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Please scan the QR code to listen to an audio version of this statement.

Date of creation: 05/2026 Date for review: 05/2028 URN: 0550

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