

# Discharge advice following a greater toe fracture

## Information for patients from the Emergency Department

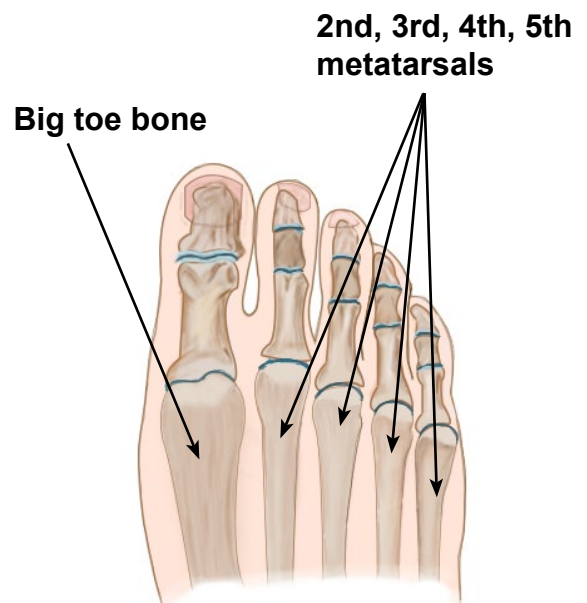
### What is my injury?

You have fractured a bone (great toe phalanx) also known as your big toe. The fracture is in a part of the bone which normally heals well and without problems.

### How will my injury be treated?

You will be given a support for your foot in the form of a removable off-loading shoe. If needed, you will also be given crutches.

You may be able to wear your own flat enclosed shoes, depending on the type of injury to your toe.



You can walk on your foot as much as your pain allows. You should gradually stop wearing the off-loading shoe over three to five weeks, as your pain settles.

If you have a wound on your toe it will have been cleaned and dressed at the hospital. You will be prescribed a course of antibiotics to take, to help prevent an infection. You should arrange a follow-up with your GP's practice nurse in two to three days, for the dressing to be changed and your wound checked.



## How long does it take to recover?

Injured toes are extremely painful and will often be swollen, red, and bruised. The pain will be worse in the first few weeks, but you may feel some discomfort for longer, as it will take four to six weeks for your injury to heal if there is a fracture. During this time walking on your foot may be painful, so to start with it may help to walk on your heel.

You may walk on your foot as much as your pain allows. If you have been given an off-loading shoe, you should gradually stop using it over three to five weeks as your pain improves.

Some fractures do not heal and continue to be painful, even after several months. Surgery may be needed at this stage to help heal the fracture.

## What can I do to help my injury?

- **Elevating** (raising) your foot will reduce the initial swelling. For example, keep your foot up on a chair to at least hip level when you are sitting (see image). When you are in bed, put your foot on a pillow.
- **Rest** can often be the only treatment needed. Pain and swelling can be eased by applying ice for approximately 15 minutes, three to four times a day. Wrap the ice in a damp towel to protect your skin.
- To help with the pain take **over-the-counter painkillers**, such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen. Please read and follow the instructions on the packet carefully.



Elevating the foot

## When can I return to my normal activities?

It usually takes between six to 12 weeks to return to your normal activities. When you start exercising again, gradually build up your activity levels.

## When should I ask for further help?

If you are still having issues two to three months after your injury, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic for further advice.

Virtual Fracture Clinic	Emergencies only (Monday to Friday)	General enquiries (Monday to Friday)	Contact number	Email
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	9am to 12.30pm	12.30pm to 5pm	07929 87 83 50	<a href="mailto:ekh-tr.VFCWHH@nhs.net">ekh-tr.VFCWHH@nhs.net</a>
Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate	9am to 12.30pm	12.30pm to 5pm	07929 87 82 83	<a href="mailto:ekh-tr.VFCQEQM@nhs.net">ekh-tr.VFCQEQM@nhs.net</a>

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)