



# Inflamed or swollen tendon (tendinopathy and tenosynovitis): aftercare advice

## Information for patients from Accident and Emergency (A&E)

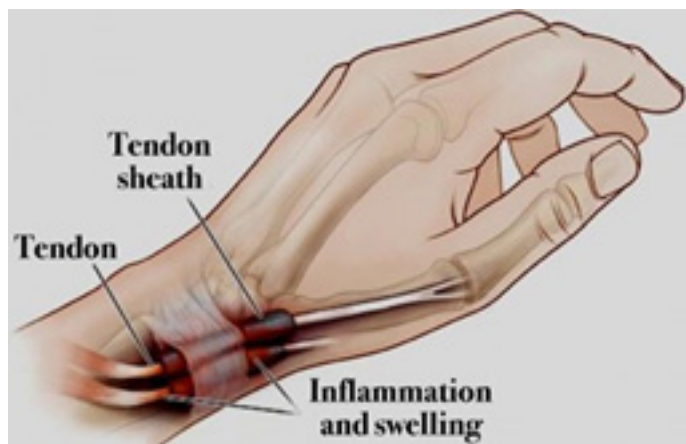
**Please speak to a healthcare professional before following the advice below**

You have come in to A&E or the urgent treatment centre with a swollen or inflamed tendon. The following outlines the symptoms you may have been experiencing, plus possible treatment options. If you have any further questions please speak to the member of staff treating you.

### What is Tendinopathy and Tenosynovitis?

Tendinopathy and tenosynovitis are types of tendon injury. Tendinopathy is a tendon injury, while tenosynovitis is inflammation (swelling) of the sheath of tissue around a tendon.

A tendon is a fibrous cord that attaches muscle to bone (see diagram). The inflammation usually happens where a tendon passes over a joint, for example, at the wrist, ankle, elbow, or shoulder.



## What are the symptoms?

- The joint is painful to move.
- There is sometimes swelling or even a lump in the affected part of the tendon.
- A grating/creaking sound may be heard when you move it. This is where the tendon moves within the inflamed sheath. This can also be felt.
- Some types of tendinopathy and tenosynovitis cause very characteristic symptoms and have their own name. For example:
  - **De Quervain's tenosynovitis** is a common condition that affects the tendons that are used to straighten (extend) your thumb. The typical symptom is pain over your wrist at the base of your thumb that is made worse by activity and helped by rest.
  - **Trigger finger** most commonly affects your ring finger. The condition prevents your finger from straightening fully.
  - **Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis)** is a condition where you have pain on the outer side of your elbow. It is usually due to overuse of your forearm muscles.
  - **Golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis)** is similar to tennis elbow but the pain is felt on the inner side of your elbow.
  - **Achilles tendinopathy** affects the large tendon just behind and above the heel.
  - **Rotator cuff tendinopathy** - your rotator cuff is a group of four muscles that help to lift and rotate your shoulder. The tendons from these muscles can sometimes become irritated due to overuse.

## What treatment options are there?

- **Rest your affected joint with or without a support.** Where your elbow or shoulder is affected this support may be in the form of a sling, whereas a problem with your wrist may be more comfortably supported in a splint. Please remove the sling and/or splint at regular intervals during the day and especially at night to help circulation.
- **Painkillers**, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, can be taken three to four times a day (check the advice that comes with the tablets).
- You can use **ice (or a cold flannel)** to ease the pain by wrapping crushed ice in a damp towel and placing it over your injury. Leave the ice in place for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove. Do this every two to four hours during the day, for two to three days.

**CAUTION:** ice can cause burns, so do not put it directly on your skin, always use a towel. Protect sensitive skin with baby oil.

## What should I do if it does not get better?

Recovery can take weeks to several months, however if it does not get any better after seven to 10 days then please go to your GP for further advice.

## Useful contact details

- **Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments** (open 24 hours a day, seven days a week)
  - **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital (QEQM)**, Ramsgate Road, Margate CT9 4BG  
Telephone: 01843 23 50 30
  - **William Harvey Hospital (WHH)**, Kennington Road, Ashford TN24 0LZ  
Telephone: 01233 61 67 28
- **Urgent Treatment Centres (previously known as Minor Injury Units)**
  - **Buckland Hospital**, Coombe Valley Road, Dover CT17 0HD  
Telephone: 01304 22 26 21  
Open: 8am to 8pm (x-ray 9am to 5pm)
  - **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Ethelbert Road, Canterbury CT1 3NG  
Telephone: 01227 86 42 42  
Open: 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- **For non-emergency information and advice call NHS 111** - just dial 111 from your phone

## Further Urgent Treatment Centres (previously known as Minor Injury Units)

- **Faversham Health Centre**  
Telephone: 01795 56 20 11  
Opening times: Urgent Treatment Centre: 8am to 8pm (7 days)  
X-ray Department: 10am to 4pm (Monday to Friday)
- **Victoria Hospital, Deal**  
Telephone: 01304 86 54 20  
Opening times: Urgent Treatment Centre: 8am to 8pm (7 days)  
X-ray Department: 9am to 5pm (Monday to Friday)
- **Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone**  
Telephone: 01303 85 27 27  
Opening times: Urgent Treatment Centre: 8am to 8pm (7 days)  
X-ray Department: 9am to 5pm (Monday to Friday)
- **Estuary View Urgent Treatment Centre, Whitstable**  
Telephone: 01227 28 43 09  
Opening times: Urgent Treatment Centre: 8am to 8pm (7 days)  
X-ray Department: 8am to 8pm (7 days)
- **Herne Bay Urgent Treatment Centre, Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital**  
Telephone: 01227 59 47 00  
Opening times: Urgent Treatment Centre: 8am to 8pm (7 days)

**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)