

A broken bone in your pelvis (pubic rami fracture)

Emergency Department
Information for Patients

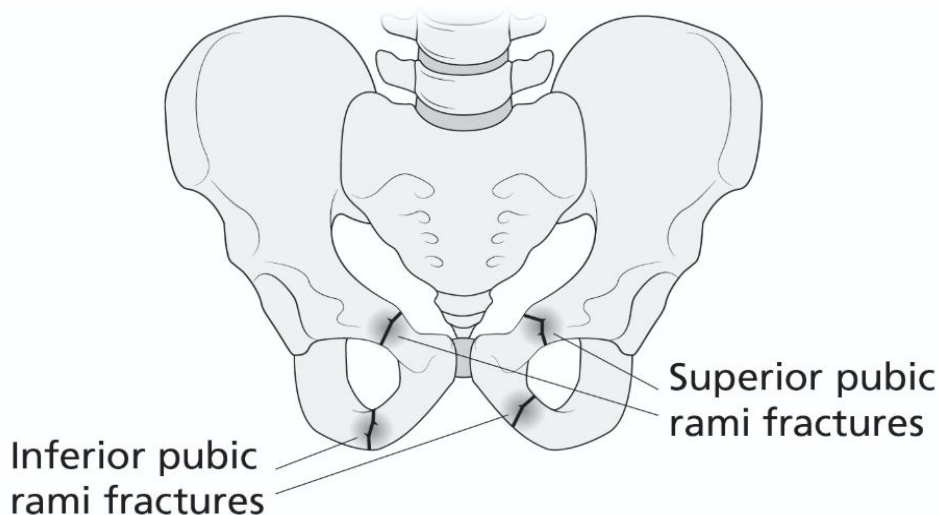
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What is a pubic rami fracture?

The **pubic rami** are bones at the front of your pelvis. They are an O shape.

A **fracture** means that a bone has cracked or broken.

A pubic ramus fracture is a common injury, mainly after a fall. Most of these fractures heal well without an operation.



Why have I been given this leaflet?

Your X-ray shows that you have a fracture (break) in your pubic ramus.

This leaflet will give you advice on managing your fracture, pain and recovery.

What symptoms might I have?

You may have:

- Pain in your groin, hip, bottom, or lower back.
- Pain when walking or standing.
- Bruising around your hip or groin.
- Difficulty getting in and out of bed or a chair or changing position.

Why has this happened?

This can happen for different reasons. It could be because of:

- **Osteoporosis:** This is a condition that softens bones. It makes them more at risk of fractures. Postmenopausal women and older men are more at risk of this.
- **Trauma:** Injuries from falls, accidents or forceful impacts.

How long will it take to heal?

Most pubic rami fractures take about **6 to 8 weeks** to heal.

Some people, mainly older adults, may take longer to recover.

You may still have some aches for a few months. This is normal and should slowly improve.

How will my fracture be treated?

Most pubic rami fractures do not need surgery or a brace. They usually heal with time, pain relief and changes to your activities.

Your GP will manage your treatment. You will not need any follow up from the hospital.

Should I stay active?

Please stay as active as you can. This can reduce the risk of other complications such as chest infections, constipation, blood clots, and more fractures. It also helps you keep your muscles and bones strong. It helps healing and reduces your chances of on-going pain after your fracture has healed.

You may need to reduce some of your daily activities, sports and heavy lifting until you feel comfortable enough to do them.

What movement should I do?

Your symptoms will guide the amount of movement and the activities you can do. It is normal for your pain levels to change from day to day. It may also change with different activities that you have done.

You can put as much weight on your leg as you feel able to.

You might need a walking stick, crutches, or a walking frame for a short time.

Try to walk little and often. Slowly increase the distance as the pain gets better.

Avoid twisting. Make sure you turn your feet. Do not twist from your hips.

Everyday activities

Going upstairs: Uninjured leg goes up first, followed by the injured leg.

Going downstairs: The injured leg does down first, then the un-injured leg.

Getting in and out of bed: When getting into bed, try and shuffle your bottom back onto the bed as far as possible before lifting your legs up.

You can sleep in any position you find comfortable, putting a pillow between your knees when sleeping on your side may help.

Sitting: Avoid sitting on low chairs and sitting for a long time without walking. Use your hands on the arms of the chair to help gently lower yourself into the chair when sitting.

Dressing: Dress your injured leg first and undress it last.

Getting into a car: Push the passenger seat right back and have it slightly reclined. Stand with your back to the seat and slowly lower yourself to the edge of the seat. Push yourself backwards towards the driver's seat as far as you can go, then lift your legs in slowly.

Pain

Pain is often worse during the first few weeks. It should slowly improve as your fracture heals.

You can also:

- Rest when you need to.
- Change position often.
- Use ice wrapped in a tea towel or a wrapped ice pack for up to 15 minutes a few times a day during the first few days. Never put ice directly on your skin.

What pain killers should I take?

You must take regular pain relief, as advised by your clinician as this is an uncomfortable injury. Pain relief will help you keep moving.

Taking strong painkillers and not moving as much as normal can cause constipation.

You may need some laxatives.

For more advice on pain relief, you can speak to a pharmacist.

You can also go to www.yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/ and search 'Taking pain relief for an injury after discharge from the Emergency Department', or leaflet number 1238. Or scan the QR code:

If medicines are not helping with your pain, please see your GP.



How can I keep my bones healthy?

Your fracture may be a sign of osteoporosis (a condition that softens bones and makes them more likely to break). Please talk to your GP about steps you can take to strengthen your bones. This can be making sure you have enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet.

Your GP may recommend tests to check your bone health. Depending on the results of the tests, you may be prescribed medication to improve your bone strength.

More information on bone health recovery

Avoiding smoking as this can delay healing

Smoking also slows down the cells that build bone in your body. This means smoking could reduce your bone strength and increase your risk of breaking a bone. Scan the QR code or go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>



Eat a well-balanced diet as this can help with healing

Eating the right things supports your bone health at every stage of your life. Calcium and vitamin D are two nutrients that are well-known to be important for bones. But there are many other vitamins, minerals and nutrients that are vital to help your bones stay healthy and strong. Scan the QR code or go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>



Reduce alcohol intake

If you drink a lot of alcohol, your risk of osteoporosis and broken bones is significantly higher. As you get older and become less steady on your feet, as being drunk or tipsy increases your chances of a fall.

For more advice go to www.yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/ and search: 'Advice and support if you are drinking too much alcohol' or leaflet number 1161. Or scan the QR code:



Do I need physiotherapy and occupational therapy?

Most people do not need routine physiotherapy. Once the fracture heals, you will be able to return to normal activity as your pain lessens. If you still have stiffness and pain after 8 weeks talk to your GP. They may want to review you before referring you to physiotherapy. If you were admitted to hospital after your fracture because of difficulties with your mobility and daily activities, follow up appointments may have been made for you, this will have been communicated to you before leaving hospital.

Can I drive?

You can have a look at the DVLA website: <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving/find-condition-online>

You should also contact your insurance provider before driving as your injury may affect your insurance.

You must be able to safely do an emergency stop and manoeuvre comfortably. You should always be in full control of your vehicle comfortably.

Can I work?

This depends on what job you do.

If the job is manual and you need to drive, you may need to take some time off. If you did not get a fit note from the Emergency Department and you feel you need one, your GP can give you one.

When should I get medical help?

Get medical advice if:

- Your pain suddenly becomes much worse.
- You cannot put any weight on your leg.
- You have a fever, or the painful area becomes red or very swollen.
- You notice new numbness or weakness in your legs.

Contact details

Injuries. Emergency Department, Leicester Royal Infirmary: **0116 258 5727**

Or you can contact your own GP for further advice.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.

To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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