

How long will it take to heal?

Whilst your doctor or nurse can give you an estimate as to how long it will take for your soft tissue injury to heal, it is very dependent on the type and severity of injury you have sustained.

As a guide, it can take several weeks for injuries to heal and full recovery often takes at least six weeks.

When can I return to sport or strenuous activity?

You can usually return to sport or strenuous activity when the injured area remains pain-free during normal day-to-day activities. It is normal to feel some discomfort when you first return to sport, but this should not last long. If you are worried, seek advice from your GP or physiotherapist.

Useful contacts:

Your GP surgery on:.....
(Please insert surgery number here)

GP Out of Hours: (After 6.30pm and before 8am). Ring **111** and you can speak to a doctor. If necessary, your child can be seen at one of their centres.

Bristol City Walk-in Centre at Broadmead Medical Centre located in Boots (Mon-Sat 8am-8pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 11am-5pm) on: **0117 954 9828**

South Bristol NHS Community Hospital Urgent Care Centre (Every day 8am-8pm) on: **0117 342 9692**
Visit www.nhs.uk to find your nearest centre.

If your child is seriously ill, you may be asked to attend the Children's Hospital emergency department.

For further copies of this leaflet, or if you would like it in other formats or languages, please contact 0117 900 2384.

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Parent's guide to soft tissue injury



What is a soft tissue injury?

Soft tissue injury refers to an injury to the “softer” aspects of the outer body, such as skin, muscle and tendons.



What can be done to prevent further injury?

1. **Rest** – resting the injured area during the early phase of healing (usually the first 24 to 48 hours) prevents the area being stressed. Following this it is important to start gently moving the injured area again early on to prevent problems such as muscle and joint stiffness. It is normal to experience some mild discomfort whilst exercising the affected area but you should not exercise to the point where you are developing sharp pains.
2. **Apply a cold pack** - the easiest way to apply 'cold' is to use some crushed ice, a bag of frozen peas, or an ice compress. It is important to wrap ice in a damp towel before applying it to the skin to avoid ice burns. Hold the ice in place for 10 minutes and repeat this every two hours until the swelling and 'heat' from the injury have gone away.
3. **Raise the injured area** - elevating the injured area above the level of the heart helps minimise swelling and should be done as soon as possible after the injury. Please make sure that the elevated area is adequately supported (for example, using cushions).
4. **Antibiotics** - with all injuries, it is important to prevent further injury occurring. Exactly what you need to do

depends on the area that has been damaged. In some cases it may be necessary to protect the injured area for a short period of time through the use of protective supports. These include equipment such as crutches, slings, braces or splints.

How long to use protective supports depends on the severity of injury and in what activities you wish to partake. It is very important that you do not use a support for longer than necessary as this can lead to problems with muscle and joint stiffness.

As a rough guide:

- For mild injury: use a protective support for up to three days.
- For moderate injury: use a protective support for three to five days.
- For severe injury: follow professional advice.