

Tailbone Injuries

What is a tailbone injury?

Your tailbone (coccyx) is actually made up of several bones that are located at the end of your lower back. Tailbones can be bruised or broken.

How does it occur?

A tailbone injury usually occurs from a direct fall onto the coccyx.

What are the symptoms?

Your tailbone is very tender. You have pain when you are sitting. You may also have pain when you walk and when you have a bowel movement.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will review your symptoms and examine your back and tailbone. Your doctor may order an x-ray to see if your tailbone is broken.

How is it treated?

An injured tailbone needs time to heal. A bruised tailbone may take several days to several weeks to completely heal. A fractured tailbone takes 4 to 6 weeks to heal. In either case, people sometimes have pain for a long time.

While your tailbone injury is healing it is very important to use a doughnut cushion when you are sitting. A doughnut cushion may be purchased at a medical supply

house or you may use a child's swimming inner tube.

You should place an ice pack on your tailbone for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 to 3 days or until the pain goes away. Your doctor may prescribe an anti-inflammatory or pain medications.

It is important to avoid constipation while your tailbone is healing. Drink plenty of fluids and increase the amount of fiber in your diet.

How can I prevent tailbone injuries?

Most tailbone injuries are caused by accidents that cannot be prevented. In some contact sports such as football or hockey, it is important to wear protective equipment.