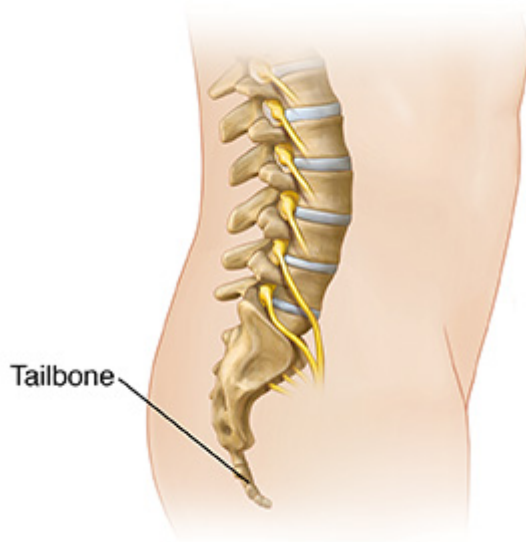


# Tailbone (Coccyx) Fracture



Your tailbone (coccyx) is the bone at the very end of your spine. Most tailbone injuries are caused by a seated fall or direct blow. Often, the area around your tailbone is just bruised. But sometimes the bone itself may break (fracture). A tailbone fracture can be very painful and may take some time to heal.



## Risk factors

People assigned female at birth are more likely to injure their tailbones. That's because the bone is more exposed. In some cases, tailbones can fracture during childbirth.

## When to go to the Emergency Room (ER)

Tailbone injuries are likely to cause pain, swelling, and bruising. Sitting or having a bowel movement may be especially painful. Still, most tailbone fractures are not medical emergencies. In most cases you can go to your healthcare provider for treatment. But you should go to the emergency room (ER) if you have extreme pain, tingling, or weakness in 1 or both legs.

## What to expect in the ER

Here's what will happen in the ER:

- A healthcare provider will examine your tailbone. This is done by pressing on the area and possibly gently inserting a gloved finger into your rectum.
- X-rays may be taken to check the extent of the injury.
- You may be given medicine to ease discomfort.

## Treatment

There is no way to hold a fractured tailbone in place. For that reason, treatment focuses on making you more comfortable while the injury heals.

- You may be told to ice your injury for 1 or 2 days to help ease swelling and pain. To make an ice pack, put ice cubes in a plastic bag that seals at the top. Wrap the bag in a thin towel or cloth. Don't put ice or an ice pack directly on the skin.
- During healing, a special doughnut pillow or cushion may be advised for comfort. It can also protect your tailbone while you sit.
- Surgery may be needed if the above treatments don't work well.

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