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Toe pain

There are lots of causes of toe pain. You can usually ease the pain yourself. But see a GP if the pain does not improve.

Easing toe pain

If you see your GP, they'll usually suggest trying these things:

Do

- ✓ rest and raise your foot when you can
- ✓ put an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas) in a towel on your toe for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ wear wide comfortable shoes with a low heel and soft sole
- ✓ take paracetamol
- ✓ buddy strap a broken toe – put a small piece of cotton wool or gauze between your sore toe and the next toe, and use tape to loosely strap it up (do not do this for a big toe or a badly broken toe)
- ✓ try regular gentle stretching exercises

Don't

- ✗ do not take ibuprofen for the first 48 hours after an injury
- ✗ do not walk or stand for long periods
- ✗ do not wear high heels or tight pointy shoes

Ask your pharmacist about:

- the best painkiller to take
- insoles and pads for your shoes
- treatments for common skin and nail problems
- if you need to see a GP

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP if:

- the pain is severe or stopping you from doing normal activities
- the pain is getting worse or keeps coming back
- the pain has not improved after treating it at home for 2 weeks
- you have any tingling or loss of sensation in your foot
- you have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes

► [What we mean by severe pain](#)

When to go to the emergency department (ED)

Go to your nearest ED if you:

- have badly hurt your big toe
- are in severe pain
- feel faint, dizzy or sick from the pain
- have a toe that is pointing out at an odd angle
- heard a snap, grinding or popping noise at the time of injury
- have difficulty moving your toes or you cannot walk

These might be signs of a badly broken toe after an injury.

Causes of toe pain

Common causes of a sore toe are exercising too much or wearing shoes that are too tight.

Your symptoms may help you find the cause of your toe pain.

Some of the possible causes of toe pain:

Pain or swelling around the nail, your nail curls into the toe

[ingrown toenail](#)

Hard bony lump near the big toe

[bunion](#)

Pain, tingling and numbness when you're cold or stressed, toes can change colour

Raynaud's or chilblains

Pain, swelling, red or bruised toe, hurts to walk

broken toe

Sudden pain, stiffness, red or hot swollen skin around the toe joint

gout

Do not worry if you're not sure what the problem is.

Follow the advice on this page and see your GP if the pain does not get better in 2 weeks.

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