

# 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.