Blunt Chest Trauma

Chest injury caused by blunt trauma can be very painful. The pain is worse with movement or breathing. Most often these injuries result in bruised or fractured ribs. Minor rib fractures may not be seen on the initial x-rays. Most broken and bruised ribs from blunt chest injuries are not serious and get better within 1-3 weeks with rest and mild pain medicine. Internal organs (heart, lungs) can be injured with blunt trauma. Further examination may be needed.

Limit activities until you can move around without much pain. Do not do any strenuous work until your injury is healed. Ice packs may be put on the injured area for 20-30 minutes several times daily to reduce pain. Rib belts may also be used to reduce pain and should be worn as directed by your caregiver. Take several deep breaths hourly to keep your lungs clear.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop increased pain, shortness of breath, or cough up blood.
- You develop nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain.
- You develop fever, dizziness, weakness, or fainting.

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