

# Achilles tendon rupture

Following your consultation you have been diagnosed with a rupture of your Achilles tendon. This information booklet aims to give you further information on the condition and its management.

## **What is the Achilles tendon?**

The Achilles tendon is the large tendon which can be felt at the bottom of the calf as it inserts into the heel bone. The tendon is made up of bundles of fibers called collagen and its function is to point the foot down and pushes us forwards during walking, running and jumping.

## **How is it injured?**

Commonly there is no prior notice to this injury occurring and is therefore difficult to prevent. It most commonly occurs to people between 30-40 years of age and during sporting activities, but can occur during more simple activities such as stepping down from a curb or jogging across the road.

## **How is it diagnosed?**

This normally happens in the Emergency Department who will check the tendon and may organise for an ultrasound scan to be carried out.

## **How is it treated?**

Commonly Achilles ruptures are treated without the need for surgery. The outcomes for non-surgical and surgical management are fairly equal, with a reduced risk of infection, wound complications and nerve injury with non-surgical management and a small decreased risk of re-rupture with surgical repair. If the rupture diagnosis is delayed for a number of weeks then your surgeon will review you to decide on which option is best for you.

Surgical and non-surgical management follow the same rehabilitation. Normally you will be in a plaster cast for around 2 weeks and will then progress to a protective boot for 7 weeks. You will be advised on how to look after the skin, tendon and boot. The boot will have a number of wedges which raise the heel and point the foot down to protect the tendon. These will be individually removed at specific dates in the

treatment as instructed by your treating practitioner. Although ankle exercises will not be started for at least 8 weeks you will be shown exercises in the early stages to keep your knee and hip strong.

## **How much weight can you put through the foot?**

Whilst in plaster cast you will not be able to put any weight through the foot. When you progress to the walker boot your treating practitioner will teach you how to safely put a small amount of weight through the foot. It is important to strictly follow this advice as putting too much weight through the foot will risk re-rupture.

## **What is the outcome?**

Most patients will make a good recovery from an Achilles tendon rupture however this can vary between people and in some cases may take 12-24 months to return to full function.

## **How to prevent re-rupture**

The risk of re-rupture is highest in the first 6 weeks after removal of the protective boot. Your Physiotherapist will advise you on protection and time frames for progressing activity however you should take care to avoid sudden overstretching or significant load to the tendon during the first 6 weeks after boot removal. You can protect the tendon from further injury by wearing supportive laced up shoes with a raised heel.

## **Blood clots**

There is a risk of blood clots forming following the injury, these can occur in the leg, called deep vein thrombosis (DVT), or in the lungs, known as pulmonary embolism (PE). This is a serious condition and you will be given an information booklet on it.

## **Skin condition**

You will be advised on monitoring skin condition and should report onset of skin reddening, ulceration, skin breakdown, tenderness, increase in temperature and swelling.

If you notice any of these symptoms, then please speak urgently to Fracture Clinic staff or if out of hours then please contact your GP or Emergency Department immediately.

## Useful numbers

### Medical Secretaries

Mr Haendlmayer: 01924 816134

Mr Eyre: 01924 542402

Mr Kheir: 01924 542495

**Fracture Clinic: 01924 541090**

---

We are committed to providing high quality care. If you have a suggestion, comment, complaint or appreciation about the care you have received, or if you need this leaflet in another format please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on: **01924 542972** or email: **pals@midyorks.nhs.uk**

### 1957a

Published Dec 2018  
Review Date 2021



**Dewsbury and District Hospital**  
Halifax Road, Dewsbury WF13 4HS

**Pinderfields Hospital**  
Aberford Road, Wakefield WF1 4DG

**Pontefract Hospital**  
Friarwood Lane, Pontefract WF8 1PL

 01924 541000

 @MidYorkshireNHS

 TheMidYorkshireHospitalsNHSTrust

 www.midyorks.nhs.uk