



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: BLUNT TRAUMA

The Student Health Provider has treated you today for blunt trauma (struck by a solid object) to the chest or abdomen.

At present, there is no sign of a serious injury to essential internal organs: The injuries appear limited to bruises of the outside tissues.

Be aware, however, that rarely a *delayed* injury to internal organs becomes apparent. The first few hours, then the first few days, are the most important time periods to watch for delayed injury.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR BLUNT TRAUMA INJURY:

1. Rest at home.
2. Drink plenty of liquids — do not force or overdo solid food.
3. Over-the-counter pain medications can relieve discomfort associated with a blunt injury. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preference.
4. Cold packs can be applied to tender areas off-and-on for several days after injury. Cold helps relieve pain and reduce swelling. After two days, apply heat in the form of warm soaks. Moist heat increases circulation in the tissues, promoting healing.
5. **MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE INTERNAL INJURY, GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT** for reevaluation. Specifically, go to the ED if you have increasing pain, shortness of breath, repeated vomiting, fainting, increasing dizziness, or pale/sweaty skin. If you have any concern that your overall condition is worsening, go to the ED at once!