

Trauma overview

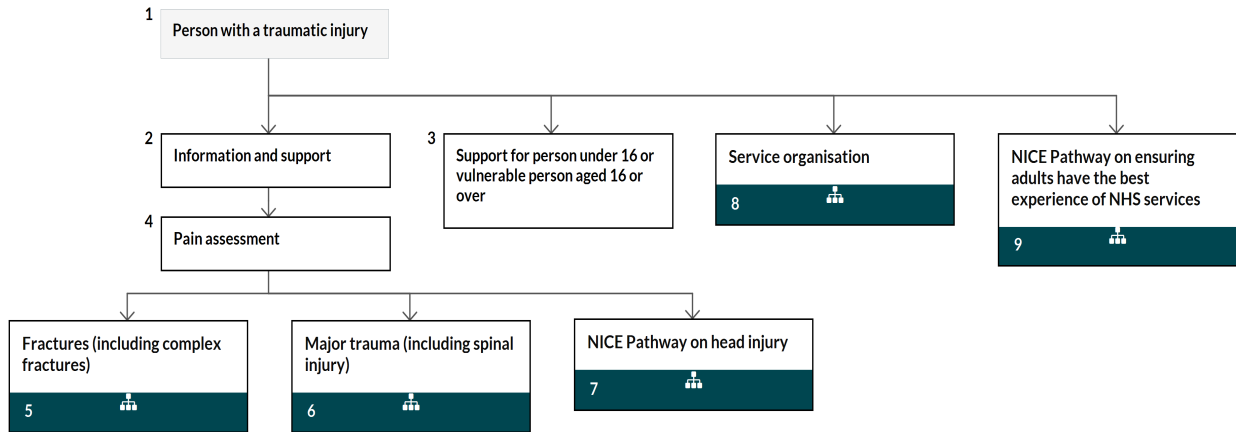
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/trauma>

NICE Pathway last updated: 03 November 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Person with a traumatic injury

No additional information

2 Information and support

Explain to patients, family members and carers what is wrong, what is happening and why it is happening. Provide:

- information on known injuries.
- details of immediate investigations and treatment, and if possible include time schedules
- information about expected outcomes of treatment, including time to returning to usual activities and the likelihood of permanent effects on quality of life, such as pain, loss of function or psychological effects.

Provide information at each stage of management (including the results of imaging) in face-to-face consultations.

Document all key communications with patients, family members and carers about the management plan.

When communicating with patients, family members or carers:

- manage expectations and avoid misinformation
- answer questions and provide information honestly, within the limits of your knowledge
- do not speculate and avoid being overly optimistic or pessimistic when discussing information on further investigations, diagnosis or prognosis
- ask if there are any other questions.

The trauma team structure should include a clear point of contact for providing information to patients, family members and carers.

If possible, ask the patient if they want someone (family member, carer or friend) with them.

3 Support for person under 16 or vulnerable person aged 16 or over

Allocate a dedicated member of staff to contact the next of kin and provide support for unaccompanied children and vulnerable young people and adults.

Contact the mental health team as soon as possible for patients who have a pre-existing psychological or psychiatric condition that might have contributed to their injury, or a mental health problem that might affect their wellbeing or care in hospital.

For a child or vulnerable young person or adult with a traumatic injury, enable their family members and carers to remain within eyesight if appropriate.

Work with family members and carers to provide information and support. Take into account the age, developmental stage and cognitive function of the child or vulnerable young person or adult.

Person under 16

Include siblings of the injured child when offering support to family members and carers.

Address issues of non-accidental injury before discharge in people with femoral fractures. This is particularly important for people who are not walking or talking. For more information, see [fractures in the NICE Pathway on child abuse and neglect](#).

See [the NICE Pathway on domestic violence and abuse](#).

4 Pain assessment

See [the NICE Pathway on patient experience in adult NHS services](#) for advice on assessing pain in adults.

Assess pain regularly in people with a traumatic injury using a pain assessment scale suitable for the person's age and developmental stage and cognitive function.

Continue to assess pain in hospital using the same pain assessment scale that was used in the pre-hospital setting.

5 Fractures (including complex fractures)

[See Trauma / Fractures](#)

6 Major trauma (including spinal injury)

[See Trauma / Major trauma](#)

7 NICE Pathway on head injury

[See Head injury](#)

8 Service organisation

[See Trauma / Major trauma service organisation](#)

9 NICE Pathway on ensuring adults have the best experience of NHS services

[See Patient experience in adult NHS services](#)

Sources

[Spinal injury: assessment and initial management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG41

[Major trauma: service delivery](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG40

[Major trauma: assessment and initial management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG39

[Fractures \(non-complex\): assessment and management](#) (2016) NICE guideline NG38

[Fractures \(complex\): assessment and management](#) (2016 updated 2017) NICE guideline NG37

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should [assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations](#) wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.