

Healthcare in North Wales is Changing: supplementary briefing paper Minor Injuries Units

Minor Injury Units (MIUs) are for less serious injuries such as sprains, cuts and grazes.

Many people go to A&E/Emergency department when they could be treated just as well and probably quicker at a minor injuries unit.

In A&E/Emergency department - staff must give priority to serious and life threatening conditions, so currently if you go there with a minor injury you may have to wait longer to be seen. Under our proposals for change, we intend to introduce better “streaming” of patients so that minor injuries are dealt with more quickly.

It is better to go to a minor injuries unit if there is one locally, where a trained nurse will check you and treat you, or if appropriate, refer you to another hospital. No appointment is needed. The purpose of a Minor Injuries Unit is to assess and treat emergency patients who have sustained an injury at any time during a previous 48 hour period.

MIUs do not have the full facilities and support services of an acute Accident & Emergency department (British Association for A&E Medicine 2000).

Minor injuries units can treat:

- Sprains and strains
- Broken bones
- Wound infections
- Minor burns and scalds
- Minor head injuries
- Insect and animal bites
- Minor eye injuries
- Injuries to the back, shoulder and chest
- Minor crush injuries
- Removing foreign bodies from ears/nose.
- Remove fish hooks
- Remove splinters
- Removal of ear rings/studs from earlobes, mouths, nose
- Facial injuries including injuries to the nose
- Nosebleeds
- Acute initial urticaria/allergic reactions
- Soft tissue injuries/bruising.
- Apply plaster of Paris
- Assess and advise
- Suturing (stitching) minor wounds

Minor injuries units cannot treat:

- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Major injuries and trauma
- Problems usually dealt with by a GP
- Stomach pains
- Gynaecological problems
- Pregnancy problems
- Allergic reactions
- Overdoses
- Alcohol related problems
- Mental health problems
- Conditions likely to require hospital admission