

Ankle Injury

Definition

- Minor injury to the ankle.
- Your child can walk, but with mild to moderate pain.
- If unsure, contact your child's doctor.

Health Information

Types of Ankle Injuries

- Sprains - stretches and tears of ligaments.
- Strains - stretches and tears of muscles (a pulled muscle).
- Muscle bruise from a direct blow.
- Bone bruise from a direct blow.
- Fractures (broken bones).
- Dislocations (bone out of joint).

Sprained Ankle: A Common Injury

- Ligaments on both sides of the ankle help to stabilize the ankle.
- The most common injury is when the foot rolls inward. The outer ankle ligaments get stretched.
- This is called a sprained or twisted ankle. It's a common injury to the ankle.
- The main symptom is pain and tenderness on the side of the sprained ankle. Some swelling often also occurs there.
- The pain is made worse with ankle movement and walking.

Symptoms of Ankle Injuries

- The main symptom is pain.
- The pain is worse with movement and walking.
- Your child may also walk with a limp.

Prevention

- Supervise young children carefully.
- Teach older children about high-risk behaviors.

Care Advice

1. Key Points

- Bruised bones or muscles can be treated at home.
- Many sprained ankles also can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. **First Aid for Ankle Injuries**

- Apply a compression wrap (elastic bandage) right away to limit bleeding and swelling. Reason: The more the initial bleeding and swelling, the longer the recovery.
- Standard treatment is R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression, and elevation) for the first 24 to 48 hours.
- Apply compression with a snug, elastic bandage for 48 hours. Numbness, tingling, or increased pain means the bandage is too tight.
- Apply crushed ice in a plastic bag or a cold pack for 20 minutes.
- Elevate and rest the injured ankle for 24 hours.
- After 24 hours of rest, allow any activity that doesn't cause pain.

3. **Cold Pack for Initial Pain**

- For pain, swelling or bruising with any ankle injury, use a cold pack. You can also use ice wrapped in a wet cloth.
- Put it on the area for 20 minutes.
- Repeat for 20 minutes every hour for the first 4 hours, then only as needed.
- Reason: Helps with the pain and helps stop any bleeding.
- Caution: Avoid frostbite.

4. **Heat for Pain After 48 Hours**

- If pain lasts over 2 days, put heat on the sore area.
- Use a heat pack, heating pad or warm wet washcloth.
- Do this for 10 minutes, as needed. Reason: increases blood flow and speeds healing.
- Caution: Avoid burns.

5. **Pain Medicine**

- For pain relief, give acetaminophen every 4 hours or ibuprofen every 6 hours as needed (See Dosage table).
- Ibuprofen may be more effective for this type of pain.
- Also continue compression with the elastic bandage as long as it helps the pain.

6. **Activity and Movement During Recovery**

- Rest the injured part for the first 24 hours.
- Then start moving the joint as tolerated. Do this at least 3 times per day. Reason: This helps prevent tight muscles and joints. It helps maintain range of motion.
- As pain improves, slowly increase activity. Allow any activity that does not cause pain.
- Here's a good rule: If it HURTS, don't do it.

7. **What to Expect:**

- Pain and swelling usually peak on day 2 or 3.
- Swelling is usually gone by 7 days.
- Pain may take 2 weeks to completely resolve.
- Protect the area from further injury until healed.

Call Your Doctor If

- Pain not improved after 3 days
- Pain or swelling lasts over 2 weeks
- Can't walk
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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