

Caring for Ankle Sprains

For Parents

Ankle Sprains Are Common During Sport Activities

Sprains are the stretching or tearing of a ligament and can cause pain, swelling, and bruising in the injured area. Most ankle sprains happen on the outer side of the ankle when a person twists or rolls the ankle.

What To Do If Your Child Sprains His or Her Ankle

For the first 2-3 days after the injury, it is important to help manage the pain and swelling in the injured area. To do this, follow the **RICE** rule:

- **Rest:** stay off of the injured leg as much as possible
- **Ice:** ice the area with a small bag of ice for 20 minutes every 4 hours
- **Compression:** an elastic compression wrap and/or a protective brace can help control the swelling and provide protection for the injured area
- **Elevation:** try to elevate the ankle whenever possible, especially when icing

Be Sure To Call or See Your Medical Provider If...

Sometimes an ankle sprain can be a more severe injury like a bone break or become a serious condition like an infection. You should see your medical provider (primary doctor, family doctor) or go to the emergency room if:

- The ankle is very swollen or deformed after the injury
- Your child cannot stand or put any weight on the ankle after injury
- Your child feels a great deal of pain on any bony parts of the ankle region
- Your child feels any tingling or “pins and needles” sensation in the lower leg, ankle, foot or toes after injury
- There is swelling, pain or redness in the upper leg or groin region – these are signs of a blood clot or infection

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