

# SPRAINS & STRAINS

## Home Care Instructions

Remember R.I.C.E. = Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevate

- **Support Injured Area:** by wrapping injured area. Be careful to not wrap too tightly, which could cut off blood supply
  - Use a sling for wrist/elbow/shoulder injuries.
  - Use an elastic bandage to wrap ankle/knee
  - Use tape to stabilize a finger or toe to the finger/toe next to it.
- **Use Cold and Heat:** Cold reduces swelling. Cold and heat are able to help reduce pain. (Use a towel to protect skin from heat/cold)
  - Apply ice for 10-15 min every hour (while awake) for the first two days
  - When swelling goes down, apply heat or cold to help with pain (Avoid using heat later in the day, it can cause swelling when less active)
- **Rest and Elevate:** Limit the use of injured area and Elevate above the level of your heart

## WARNING SIGNS:

### When to Seek Medical Attention

- Severe pain, pain increases, or pain doesn't improve in 4 days
- Unable to apply weight to injured joint (even after 24hrs)
- Area to injured joint or next to it is tender to touch
- The injured area looks crooked/bent, the anatomy of that area has changed
- When trying to use injured joint, your limb buckles or gives way
- Injured area becomes cold, blue, or numb
- Redness or red streaks spreading out from injury
- The injured area won't move or bones make a grating sound when they move

## Patient Education: Prevention

- Wear shoes that fit properly
- Warm up before working out or playing sports
- Run on even surfaces
- Perform balance exercises
- Ease into any fitness routine
- Remember that rebuilding strength is a slow/gradual process. Resuming full activity despite pain/muscle soreness increased chance of re-injury leading to a chronic problem to injured area.

## For Your Information:

- **Sprain:** an injury to a *ligament* (tough, fibrous tissue connecting bone to bone). Involves stretching or tearing of ligament tissue.
  - **Signs and symptoms:** Pain, swelling, bruising, loss of functional ability
  - Sometime a pop or tear can be felt when injury happens
- **Strain:** an injury to a *muscle* or a *tendon* (tissue that connects muscle to bones). A strain can be a simple overstretch of the muscle or tendon, or it can result in a partial or complete tear.
  - **Signs and Symptoms:** Pain, muscle spasm, muscle weakness.
  - Sometimes localized swelling, cramping or inflammation
  - Partial or complete tears can be very painful and disabling