Foot Sprain: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

A foot sprain occurs when you stretch or tear the ligaments around your foot. Ligaments are the tough tissues that connect one bone to another. A sprain can happen when you run, fall, or hit your toe against something. Sprains often happen when you jump or change direction quickly. This may occur when you play basketball, soccer, or other sports.

Most foot sprains will get better with treatment at home.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Walk or put weight on your sprained foot as long as it does not hurt.
- If your doctor gave you a splint or immobilizer, wear it as directed. If you were given crutches, use them as directed.
- For the first 2 days after your injury, avoid hot showers, hot tubs, or hot packs. They may increase swelling.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your foot for 10 to 20 minutes at a time to stop swelling. Try this every 1 to 2 hours for 3 days (when you are awake) or until the swelling goes down. Put a thin cloth between the ice pack and your skin. Keep your splint dry.
- After 2 or 3 days, if your swelling is gone, put a heating pad (set on low) or a warm cloth on your foot. Some doctors suggest that you go back and forth between hot and cold treatments.
- Prop up your foot on a pillow when you ice it or anytime you sit or lie down. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
    - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.

    - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.

- Do any exercises that your doctor or physical therapist suggests.
- Return to your usual exercise gradually as you feel better.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have increased or severe pain.
- Your toes are cool or pale or change color.
- Your wrap or splint feels too tight.
- You have signs of a blood clot, such as:
    - Pain in your calf, back of the knee, thigh, or groin.
    - Redness and swelling in your leg or groin.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in your leg or foot.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You cannot put any weight on your foot.
- You get a fever.
- You do not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

Go to https://www.healthwise.net/patiented

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