Hand Sprain: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

A hand sprain occurs when you stretch or tear a ligament in your hand. Ligaments are the tough tissues that connect one bone to another.

Most hand sprains will heal with treatment you can do 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?

- If your doctor gave you a splint or immobilizer, wear it as directed. This will help keep swelling down and help your hand heal.
- Follow your doctor's directions for exercise and other activity.
- For the first 2 days after your injury, avoid things that might increase swelling, such as hot showers, hot tubs, or hot packs.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your hand 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 hand. Some experts suggest that you go back and forth between hot and cold treatments.
- Prop up your hand 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.
- Return to your usual level of activity slowly.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your pain is worse.
- You have new or increased swelling in your hand.
- You cannot move your hand.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in your hand or fingers.
- Your hand or fingers are cool or pale or change color.
- You have a fever.
- Your hand or fingers are red.

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

- Your hand does not get better as expected.

Where can you learn more?

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

Enter **T831** in the search box to learn more about **"Hand Sprain: Care Instructions".**

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