



ANKLE SPRAINS



A sprained ankle is a common injury that can happen when you take part in sports and physical activities. It can also happen when you simply step on an uneven surface, or step down at an angle. The ligaments of the ankle hold the ankle bone and joints in position. They protect the ankle joint from abnormal movements-especially twisting, turning, and rolling of the foot. A ligament is an elastic structure. Ligaments usually stretch within their limits, and then go back to their normal position. When a ligament is stretched beyond its normal range, a sprain occurs. A severe sprain causes actual tearing of the elastic fibers. Your ankle sprain may range from a slight stretching and some damage to the fibers of the ligament to a complete tear of the ligament.

Significant sprains may mask related ankle injuries and may lead to long term instability, disability, and arthritis.

Classification of Ankle Sprains

Grade 1 Sprain - Stretching out of the ligaments.

Grade II Sprain - Tearing of some of the ligament fibers.

Grade III Sprain - Complete tear of the ligament.

Treatment

Once the diagnosis of ankle sprain has been made, the course of treatment usually requires a period of protection in order to heal. Your healthcare provider may suggest crutches for walking or to keep weight off of your ankle. Depending upon the type of injury you may require a cast, cast boot, or a removable air splint.

Grade I Sprain: (R.I.C.E. = rest, ice, compression, and elevation). Rest your ankle by not walking on it. Ice should be applied 20 to 30 minutes 3 or 4 times daily. Compression dressing such as bandages or ace-wrap immobilization and support of the injured ankle should be used. Elevate your ankle above your heart level for 48 hours.

Grade II Sprain: The R.I.C.E. guidelines can also be used. You may require a device to immobilize or splint the ankle.

Grade III Sprain: This type of sprain can be associated with permanent instability. Surgery is rarely needed, but may be required to repair torn ligaments. A short leg cast or a cast-brace may be used for several weeks.

Rehabilitation

The goal of rehabilitation is to assist you in returning to your daily activities. Our goal is for each patient to regain full range of motion (the ability to move your foot and ankle, as well as you did before your injury), full strength, and to alleviate pain.

Remember:

- Rest your ankle by not walking on it.
- Ice should be applied 20 to 30 minutes 3 or 4 times daily
- Compression dressing such as bandages or ace-wrap immobilization and support of the injured ankle.
- Elevate your ankle above your heart level for 48 hours.