



Everett Foot Clinic

Ankle Sprains

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WHAT ARE ANKLE SPRAINS?

A sudden sideways motion, a twist, or a misstep. When your foot lands off balance, muscles may give way, allowing the ankle joint to move too far. If ligaments connecting the foot and ankle-bones overstretch or tear, a sprain is the result. These sudden injuries cause pain both at the time they occur and throughout the healing process. Depending on the sprain, swelling and bruising may extend from your ankle into your foot. With proper care, however, sprains can heal correctly. And, in many cases, you can reduce the risk of re-injury.

HOW ARE ANKLE SPRAINS TREATED?

Before recommending treatment, your doctor examines your ankle and foot. He or she feels for damaged ligaments, inflamed tendons, and any displaced bones or joints. X-rays of your ankle may be taken to rule out a fracture. Depending on your injury, treatment may range from pain control to immobilization of the joint. If the sprain is severe or if a bone is damaged, surgery may be needed.

PAIN CONTROL

For a mild to moderate sprain, a few days of home care will help speed up healing. Remember to use RICE (which stands for rest, ice, compress, and elevate) to reduce pain and swelling.

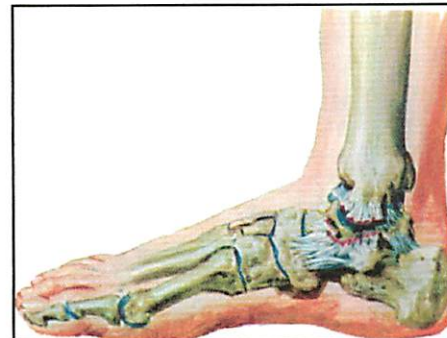
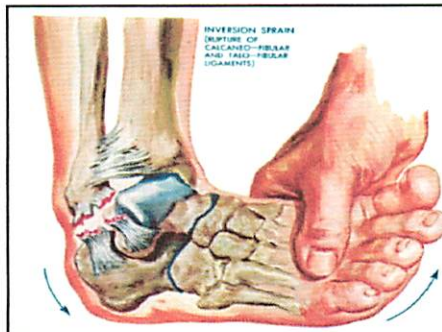
Rest the sprained ankle. Do not stand on it for at least a day or two.

Ice the sprain as often as possible. Apply ice to the injury for 20 minutes. Remove the cold pack and wait another 20 minutes. Then ice again. Protect your skin by placing a bandage or thin towel between the ice and your body.

Compress (wrap) the swollen ankle with an elastic bandage.

Elevate the sprained ankle above your heart level.

TO HELP REDUCE PAIN AND SWELLING, your doctor may suggest using a medication, such as aspirin or Ibuprofen, in addition to RICE.



Immobilize Severe Sprains

If damage or pain is severe, your doctor may tape, splint, or cast the sprain. Once immobilized, the torn tissues can rest and heal in the proper position. You may need to use crutches temporarily if your foot cannot support weight.

What Helps Recovery?

Depending on the severity of the sprain, your ankle may hurt for a month or more. Once healing is well underway, however, your doctor may suggest exercises to strengthen the ankle. If swelling results, ice and elevation can help control it.

Can Sprains Be Prevented?

The best way to prevent re-injury is to give a sprain time to heal fully. Once you're back on your feet, think before you move. Choose the right shoe for the activity. And remember to wear any splints, braces, or orthoses (custom-made shoe inserts) prescribed by your doctor.

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