



Wrist and ankle sprains are very common. A sprain is a stretching and tearing of ligaments which are fibrous bands connecting bones and stabilizing the joint. A strain is a similar injury involving the muscles. slipping, falling and twisting or rolling the ankle in or with jumping or sudden over stretching. Wrist sprains generally occur during sports, falling on an outstretched hand or catching a finger on something. Sprains can vary in severity.

How do I know if I have a sprain?

- **Immediate pain**
- **Limited joint movement**
- **Swelling**
- **Bruising**
- **Numbness**
- **Inability to put weight on the foot or use the hand/wrist**

Most sprains start to get better in a few days. The swelling may last up to 2-3 weeks. With time and rest, most sprains completely heal on their own in 2-3 weeks.

Home Care

- ⇒ To reduce swelling and aid healing, use **RICE** therapy as follows:
 - **R**-est the are as much as possible.
 - **I**-ce should be applied to the strain for the first 48-72 hours. Apply ice for 15-20 minutes several times a day. Always wrap ice in a towel or cloth.
 - **C**-ompress the strained area by wrapping it with an elastic bandage.
 - **E**-levate the injured area above your heart for the first 48-72 hours. May require the use of extra pillows or cushions.
- ⇒ Take over the counter medicine like Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or Motrin (Ibuprofen) taken as instructed to relieve the pain.
- ⇒ Resume normal activity slowly.
- ⇒ In the first 24 hours avoid things that might increase swelling: hot showers, heat rubs like Icy-Hot, hot packs, Aspirin and drinking alcohol .

Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation, treatment, instructions and stretches. If the joint appears deformed or the swelling, bruising or pain is severe seek care sooner.