



Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

A n k l e S p r a i n T r e a t m e n t

Self-Care at Home

Care at home is directed toward lessening pain and helping healing. Because most of the pain is caused by inflammation, the goal is to reduce inflammation and keep it from happening.

- **Ice** is the best treatment.
 - Applying ice to the injury will do more for most people than medications.
 - Ice counteracts the increased blood flow to the injured area.
 - It reduces the swelling, redness, and warmth.
 - Applied soon after the injury, ice prevents much of the inflammation from developing.
 - Do not apply ice directly to the skin. Use a towel between the ice and the injury, or use an ice bag. Apply ice for 20 minutes at a time, with at least 30 minutes between applications. This is to prevent frostbite, which can occur if you use ice too much or use it directly on your skin.

- **Rest** prevents further injury and avoids stress on already inflamed tissue.
 - Put the ankle joint at rest by wearing a brace or splint.
 - Compression wraps such as Ace bandages provide some support to prevent movement of the ankle. You should not, however, apply them too tightly.

- **Elevation** (keeping the injured area up as high as possible) will help the body absorb fluid that has leaked into the tissue.
 - Ideally, prop the ankle up so that it is above the level of the heart.
 - This can be done a reclining chair.
- Anti-inflammatory pain medications will reduce the pain and combat the swelling. Several are available over-the-counter, such as ibuprofen (Motrin IB and Advil) and naproxen (Aleve or Naprosyn).

Medical Treatment

Treatment by a doctor will be similar to home care, especially using ice to lessen the inflammation.

- The doctor may elect to apply a brace or cast to reduce motion of the ankle. Crutches are frequently provided so the patient does not have to bear weight on the injured ankle.
- The most common medications used for ankle sprains are anti-inflammatory pain medications that both reduce pain and help control inflammation. If the patient cannot tolerate these drugs, acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or narcotics are common alternatives.

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For more information, read the complete article, Ankle Sprain (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59381>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

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