Ankle Fracture Treatment

Self-Care at Home

If you suspect a fracture, you should call your doctor or go to a hospital's emergency department immediately. You can do the following until you can get to a hospital or doctor's office:

- Stay off the injured ankle so you do not injure it further.
- Keep the ankle elevated to help decrease swelling and pain.
- Apply cold packs to the injured area to decrease swelling and pain. Do not apply ice directly. Cold packs are effective for the first 12-24 hours.
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Excedrin, Motrin) is ideal for ankle injuries because it acts as both a pain medicine and a medicine to keep inflammation down.

Medical Treatment

- Doctors usually place a splint on your injured ankle for a few days to 2 weeks until the swelling goes down around the joint. The type of fracture and the stability of your joint will determine the type of splint that will be used.
- If your bones are not aligned properly, the doctor may realign them before placing the splint.
  - If the bones cannot be realigned properly in the emergency department, then you may require an operation.
  - An operation will also be needed if any bone has broken through the skin. If the bone breaks through the skin, the fracture is then called a compound fracture. This is more serious than a simple fracture.
- Some minor ankle fractures do not require a splint or cast. In these cases the fracture will be managed as an ankle sprain.
  - Because these fractures are very small, they heal well with this management.
  - With any injured ankle, however, you should not bear weight until a cast is placed or you are pain free.
After the swelling decreases and you are reexamined, then an orthopedic doctor or your primary care doctor may place a better-fitting cast on the ankle. Depending on the type of fracture, you may be placed in a walking cast, which can bear some weight, or you may still need a non-weight-bearing cast that will require the use of crutches to help you walk.

Depending on the degree of pain you are experiencing, your doctor may give you prescription-strength pain medication. These should be used only as needed. You should not drive or operate heavy machinery while using these medications.

For more information, read the complete article, Ankle Fracture on http://www.emedicinehealth.com.