ANKLE SPRAINS

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT & PREVENTION

A sprain is an injury to the ligaments around a joint. Ligaments are strong, flexible fibers that hold bones together. When a ligament is stretched too far or tears, the joint will become painful and swell.

CAUSES

Sprains are caused when a joint is forced to move into an unnatural position. For example, "twisting" one's ankle causes a sprain to the ligaments around the ankle.

SYMPTOMS

- Joint pain or muscle pain
- Swelling
- Joint stiffness
- Discoloration of the skin, especially bruising

FIRST AID

1. Apply ice immediately to help reduce swelling. Wrap the ice in cloth – DO NOT place ice directly on the skin.

2. Try NOT to move the affected area. To help you do this, bandage the affected area firmly, but not too tightly. ACE bandages work well. Use a splint if necessary. Keep the swollen joint elevated above the level of the heart, even while sleeping.

3. Rest the affected joint for several days.

Aspirin, Ibuprofen or other pain relievers can help. DO NOT give aspirin to children. Keep pressure off the injured area until the pain subsides (usually 7-10 days for mild sprains and 3-5 weeks for severe sprains). You may require crutches when walking. Rehabilitation to regain the motion and strength of the joint should begin within one week.

WHEN TO CONTACT A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

Call 911 If:

- The suspected broken bone is in the head, neck, back, hip, pelvis, or upper leg
- You cannot completely immobolize the injury at the scene by yourself
- There is severe bleeding
- An area below the injured joint is pale, cold, clammy, or blue
- There is a bone projecting through the skin

Other broken bones may not be medical emergencies, but they still deserve medical attention. Contact your health care provider.

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CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- Swelling does not go down within 2 days

- You have symptoms of infection – the area becomes more red, more painful, warm or you have a fever over 100 degrees F

- The pain does not go away after several weeks

PREVENTION

- Wear protective footwear for activities that place stress on your ankle and other joints.

- Make sure that shoes fit your feet properly.

- Always warm up and stretch prior to exercise and sports.

- Avoid sports and activities for which you are not conditioned.

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SSM HEALTH CARDINAL GLENNON SPORTSCARE

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, SSM Health

Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLU*Care* Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at **314-577-5640** or visit us at **cardinalglennon.com/sportscare**.

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, **24 hours a day in the ER** at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles.

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