

Sprains

You have been diagnosed in the Emergency Department as suffering from a sprain. This leaflet explains how to care for your sprain at home.

What is a sprain?

Sprains are painful injuries to the joints resulting in the partial or complete tearing of ligaments.

Discharge advice

- For the first 24 hours, keep the injured limb raised on two pillows while lying down.
- Apply ice bags to the injured area for the first 24 hours for about 10-20 minutes at a time with at least 30 minutes in between applications to allow the limb to feel warm to the touch and have normal sensation before reapplying. Then continue as advised by the Emergency Department doctor or practitioner. Place the ice or frozen peas in a plastic bag with a towel around it to prevent frostbite to the skin.
- You may take Paracetamol every six hours or Ibuprofen every eight hours for pain or discomfort. Paracetamol and Ibuprofen may be taken together in normal dosages. You may take other pain medicine as prescribed by your doctor or emergency nurse practitioner. Talk to your GP if you are concerned about taking painkillers.
- You can apply a tubigrip at home as long as it's not too tight and you should remove it at night.

What to look out for

A hairline fracture (this is the same as a broken bone) may not show on initial x-rays. X-rays may sometimes not show a small fracture until a week or ten days later.

Persistent pain and inability to use the injured area for more than two to three days are warning signs. See your GP for a follow-up visit as soon as possible if you are worried.

Persistent pain and swelling indicate that you should be seen for further evaluation and/or more x-rays. A radiologist (a specialist in reading x-rays) will re-read your x-rays and you will be contacted if the radiologist adds more information.

Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the practitioner looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – ‘*Overall, how was your experience of our service?*’ – by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Emergency Department

Reviewed: December 2021.

Next review due: December 2023