



# RICE: Care of bumps, bruises, sprains and strains

This leaflet outlines the routine care of many injuries: **Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (RICE).**

- **Rest** is needed to allow your body to heal. Routine activities can usually be resumed when comfortable. Injured ligaments, tendons (cord-like structures that attach muscle to bone) and bones take approximately six weeks to heal.
- **Ice** following an injury helps keep the swelling down and reduces pain. Do not apply ice directly to skin. Apply ice bags (ice in a plastic bag or frozen peas with a towel around it to prevent frostbite to skin) for only 10-20 minutes at a time with at least 30 minutes in between to allow the skin to feel warm to the touch and have normal sensation before reapplying to the injured area for the first 24 hours to 48 hours.
- **Compression** can help to give support and reduce pain; however, it will not speed up healing. If you wish to apply a stretchy bandage then it should not be applied tightly. Remove at night.
- **Elevation** helps reduce swelling and decreases pain. Aim to elevate the affected limb above the heart area if able.

## What to look out for

- Persistent pain and inability to use the injured area for more than 2 to 3 days are warning signs. You should contact your GP if you are concerned.
- A hairline fracture (this is the same as a broken bone) may not be seen on initial x-rays. Persistent pain and swelling indicate that further evaluation, non-weight bearing (use of crutches as instructed), and/or further x-rays are needed. X-rays may sometimes not show a small fracture until a week or 10 days later.
- A radiologist (a specialist in reading X-rays) will re-read your x-rays and you will be contacted if the radiologist spots anything else.

## 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](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm).

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

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

RBFT Emergency Department.

Reviewed: December 2023. Next review due: December 2025

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent