

Care of bumps, bruises, sprains and strains

The routine care of many injuries includes:

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) about every 2 hours for 20 minutes, while awake, 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.

Emergency Department

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