

Patient Information: Ankle Sprains



What are the types of ankle sprains that can occur?

- A low ankle sprain is an injury to the ligament on the outside of the ankle that connects to your foot
 - This is the most common type of ankle sprain
- A high ankle sprain is an injury to ligaments above the ankle joint
- Most ankle sprains are inversion injuries, where the outer edge of your foot rolls inward, under your leg
- A grade 1 sprain is mild stretching and tearing of ligaments
- A grade 2 sprain is partial tearing of ligaments
- A grade 3 sprain is complete tear of ligaments

What are the symptoms of an ankle sprain?

- Pain, swelling, instability, and tenderness to touch
- With low ankle sprains pain can radiate into the foot
- With high ankle sprains pain can radiate up the leg



How are ankle sprains diagnosed?

- An X-ray will be obtained to rule out a fracture of your ankle or the bones in your foot
- Your physician will examine the strength and stability of your ankle
- Musculoskeletal ultrasound can be used to evaluate the ligaments of your ankle
- In severe cases, or those that do not respond to treatment, an MRI may be ordered to evaluate soft tissue damage



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How are ankle sprains treated?

- RICE is the primary treatment for all ankle sprains: Rest from weightbearing activities, ice regularly, compression wraps (possibly combined with a walking boot and/or crutches), and elevation to improve swelling
- After the initial pain and swelling improves, gentle exercises for strength, flexibility, and range of motion can be initiated- if this is tolerated, a gradual return to full activity can be initiated
- In rare, severe cases, surgery may be needed to repair torn ligaments

How can I prevent ankle sprains?

- Wear activity-appropriate, supportive footwear
- Avoid or exercise with caution on uneven or poorly maintained surfaces
- Warm up and stretch prior to activity, and do not exercise past the point of fatigue
- Integrate "foot core" training into your regular exercise routine- see below



Where can I learn more about ankle sprains?

- Education- OrthoInfo:
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/sprained-ankle/>
- Foot core exercises:
http://running.competitor.com/2015/08/training/how-runners-can-improve-foot-strength_134271
- Ankle rehabilitation- Boston Sports Medicine:
http://www.bostonsportsmedicine.com/pdf/protocols/ankle_sprain.pdf

To schedule an appointment, visit the Steward St. Elizabeth's Sports Medicine website at: semc.org/services-directory/orthopedics/sportsmedicine
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Adapted from: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (www.aaos.org), Hospital for Special Surgery (www.hss.edu), Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.org)
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