

Ankle sprain injuries

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

You have had an injury involving muscles and ligaments in your ankle.

This leaflet tells you about your injury and the symptoms you can expect. It gives advice on treatment to relieve your symptoms. It also gives advice on posture and exercises you can do to help your recovery.

Your ankle may be:

- painful
- swollen
- difficult to move
- difficult to walk on.

Pain and stiffness may not be noticed immediately after your ankle sprain or injury, but may get worse over the next 24 - 48 hours. It will gradually improve. These symptoms can last from a few days to a few weeks or more.

After examining you, your doctor may not have felt it was necessary for you to have an x-ray to confirm you have a sprain or ligament injury.

What can I do to help myself?

To relieve your pain and reduce any swelling:

- take painkillers as instructed by your doctor. Always follow the instructions provided in the leaflet supplied with your tablets.
- place a cold compress (for example, a bag of frozen peas wrapped in towel) over the part of your ankle that hurts

Do not put ice directly against your skin

Do not use the cold compress for more than 20 minutes

Repeat every 2-3 hours

- when sitting, elevate (raise) your injured ankle, either on a stool, chair, arm of sofa or on a pillow when in bed
- try not to walk on your ankle for 1-2 days after your injury. You may put your full weight on your foot as soon as it is comfortable to do so.

Ankle sprain injuries

- avoid standing still for long periods of time.

To help improvement:

Begin exercising your ankle, 'little and often', starting with slow small movements and gradually increase. To exercise your ankle, keeping your knees straight:

- point your toes forward and then up towards your chest, as far as you can
- turn your ankle to the right and then to the left
- turn your foot in a circle

This will be painful at the start, but will not harm your ankle. A cold compress applied to your ankle for about 5 minutes before you do your exercises may help.

If you follow this advice you should:

- notice less pain and stiffness in your ankle
- be able to walk with less discomfort.

You should continue with the exercises until your ankle is no longer painful or stiff.

When can I expect my ankle to be back to normal?

Your sprained ankle should start to get better within 2 weeks, but it can take 6 - 8 weeks to heal fully.

What if it does not get better?

If your ankle does not improve after 2 weeks you should make an appointment to see your GP or return to Accident and Emergency.

Do not drive until full movement of your ankle is possible.

Ankle sprain injuries

Contact numbers

If you need further advice or have any problems please telephone the Accident and Emergency Department or the Urgent Care Centre.

University Hospital of North Tees

Accident and Emergency Department

telephone: 01642 382799

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Urgent Care Centre

telephone: 111 (NHS)

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Further information is available from:

NHS Choices

telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)

Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones

or via the website at www.nhs.uk

Information used in the development of this leaflet:

Royal College of Radiologists (1998), Guidelines for Doctors, 4th Edition, 1998

McKinney, (1998), BMJ vol 299; pages 1006-8

Cambridge Textbook of Accident & Emergency Medicine, ISBN 0 521 43379 7

Ankle sprain injuries

This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883

Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE
University Hospital of Hartlepool, Holdforth Road, Hartlepool. TS24 9AH

Telephone: 01642 617617

Fax: 01642 624089