

# Sprains

## Baylor SportsCare

### We'll give you a healthy advantage.

Baylor SportsCare provides the winning combination of education, prevention, medical coverage and sports medicine for athletes of all ages.

- Access Baylor Health Care System specialized sports medicine physicians\* and services throughout the Metroplex
- Medical coverage at games and events utilizing physicians, nurses and licensed athletic trainers
- Educational programs on injury prevention & performance enhancement
- Comprehensive medical support for groups, teams and individuals

For more information about SportsCare, or for help in finding a physician who is right for you, contact your local SportsCare representative at

(972) 512-7404

or call **1-800-4BAYLOR** and ask for "Baylor SportsCare"

\*Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor University Medical Center or Baylor Health Care System. CE 12.07

## Definition

A sprain is an injury to the ligaments around a joint. Ligaments are strong, flexible fibers that hold bones together. When a ligament is stretched too far or tears, the joint becomes painful and swells.

## Causes

Sprains are caused when a joint is forced to move into an unnatural position. For example, "twisting" one's ankle causes a sprain to the ligaments around the ankle.

## Symptoms

- Pain and difficulty moving the injured joint
- Discolored and bruised skin
- Swelling
- Joint stiffness

## First Aid

- Apply ice immediately to reduce swelling. Wrap ice in a cloth; avoid using directly on the skin. Apply for 10-15 minutes hourly the first day and then every 3 to 4 hours.
- Try NOT to move the affected area. To help you do this, bandage the affected area firmly, but not tightly. ACE bandages work well. Use a splint if necessary.
- Rest the affected joint for several days.
- Keep the swollen joint elevated above the level of the heart, even while sleeping.
- Aspirin, ibuprofen or other pain relievers can help. DO NOT give aspirin to children.
- Keep pressure off the injured area until pain subsides (usually 7-10 days for mild sprains and 3-5 weeks for severe sprains). Rehabilitation to regain motion and strength should begin with one week.

## When to Contact a Medical Professional

- You suspect a broken bone
- The joint appears to be deformed
- You have a serious injury or the pain is severe
- There is an audible popping sound and immediate difficulty using the joint
- The swelling does not go down within 2 days
- You have symptoms of infection: the area becomes red, warm, or you have fever 100°+
- The pain does not go away after several weeks

## Prevention

- Wear protective footwear for activities that place stress on the ankle and other joints.
- Always warm-up and stretch prior to exercise and sports.
- Avoid sports and activities for which you are not conditioned.