

How do I treat a sprain or strain?

Paediatric Management Advice Leaflet

In the first 24-72 hours of an injury, it is important to follow the below advice.

P — Protection. A support may be beneficial in the first 24-72 hours. Wearing supportive footwear may help to protect from further injury.

R — Rest. Complete rest is not generally advised but relative rest will enable the healing process to start. Encourage your child to walk as normally as possible. The distance they can complete may be limited due to their injury. Encourage active movement to prevent the joint from becoming stiff and to assist with swelling. Avoid completing strenuous activity for the first 48-72 hours following injury.

I — Ice. Ice helps to reduce swelling and bruising. Apply ice (ice pack or pack of frozen vegetables) wrapped in a damp cloth over the swollen area for 15-20 minutes. Repeat every 2-3 hours for the first 24-72 hours. Do not apply ice when your child is sleeping. Do not apply ice if your child has circulatory problems or reduced skin sensation. Check the skin regularly for redness. If it becomes uncomfortable, stop treatment until it returns to normal.

C — Compression. Using a soft bandage such as a tubi-grip for the first 24-72 hours can help reduce the swelling. The bandage should not be too tight, but provide gentle compression. Do not allow your child to sleep with the bandage on and regularly check the circulation in the area.

E — Elevation. Whilst resting, support your child's joint on something higher than the rest of their body. Try not to allow them to stand for long periods or sit with their joint resting on the floor.

Paediatric Physiotherapy Service		Author: Physiotherapy	
ID No: PHYSIO - 014 – Sprain or strain		Version: 004	
Date of Issue: April 2020		Review Date: April 2023	
Contact details			
Paediatric Physiotherapy Service Tel: 01282 803587			