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Ankle pain

There are lots of causes of ankle pain. You can usually ease the pain yourself. But talk to your GP if the pain does not improve.

Easing ankle pain

If you see your GP, they'll usually suggest you try these things:

Do

- ✓ rest and raise your ankle when you can
- ✓ put an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas) in a towel on your ankle for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ wear wide comfortable shoes with a low heel and soft sole
- ✓ use soft insoles or heel pads in your shoes
- ✓ wrap a bandage around your ankle to support it
- ✓ try regular gentle stretching exercises
- ✓ take paracetamol

Don't

- ✗ do not take ibuprofen for the first 48 hours after an injury
- ✗ do not walk or stand for long periods
- ✗ do not wear high heels or tight pointy shoes

How your pharmacist can help

Ask your pharmacist about:

- the best painkiller to take
- insoles and pads for your shoes
- treatments for common skin problems
- if you need to see a GP

When to contact your GP

Talk to your GP if:

- the pain is severe or stopping you from doing normal activities
- the pain is getting worse or keeps coming back
- the pain has not improved after treating it at home for 2 weeks
- you have any tingling or loss of sensation in your foot
- you have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes

► [What we mean by severe pain](#)

When to go to the emergency department (ED)

Go to your nearest ED or injury unit if you:

- have severe pain
- feel faint, dizzy or sick from the pain
- have an ankle or foot that has changed shape or is at an odd angle
- heard a snap, grinding or popping noise at the time of injury
- cannot walk

These may be signs of a broken ankle.

Causes of ankle pain

Common causes of ankle pain are exercising too much or wearing shoes that are too tight.

Your symptoms may help you find the cause of your ankle pain.

Symptoms Pain, swelling, bruising that started after intense or repetitive exercise

Possible cause Sprained ankle

Symptoms Pain in your ankle and heel, pain in your calf when standing on your tiptoes

Possible cause Achilles tendonitis

Symptoms Redness and swelling, dull aching pain

Possible cause Bursitis

Symptoms Sudden sharp pain, swelling, a popping or snapping sound during the injury, difficulty walking, ankle at an odd angle

Possible cause Broken ankle

Do not worry if you're not sure what the problem is.

Follow the advice on this page and see your GP if the pain does not get better in 2 weeks.

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