

# Sprained Ankle: What's the Treatment?

To help your sprained ankle heal, you'll need to ease the pain and bring down the swelling. Make an appointment right away for any ankle sprain, mild or severe. Your doctor will examine you and let you know if something more serious is wrong with your ankle.

**Go to the emergency room if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- Pain, bruising, or severe swelling
- Bleeding, numbness, or change in color of the affected area
- Your ankle looks deformed or seems dislocated
- You can't put any weight on it

## **Control Swelling**

If your ankle is just painful and swollen, remove ankle bracelets or toe rings right away. Then try the "RICE" method to ease your symptoms. RICE stands for "rest, ice, compress, and elevate." Here's how it works:

- Rest the ankle (use crutches if needed)
- Ice the ankle for 20 to 30 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for the first 2 days
- Compress (wrap) the ankle lightly -- not tightly -- with an elastic bandage or ankle brace
- For the first 48 hours, elevate (raise) the ankle higher than your heart whenever you're lying down

## **How Do I Wrap My Ankle?**

Take the compression wrap out of the packaging and unroll it. Place a small section of the cloth just behind your toes and begin to wrap it in a spiral toward your heart. Each layer should cover about half the width of the previous one. Continue wrapping around the foot, heel, and ankle until every bit of skin -- up to several inches above the injury -- is covered.

If you still have pain and swelling, ask your doctor about over-the-counter pain relievers. Don't give aspirin to anyone under age 19.