

# **Patient Information - Ankle Sprain**

## **Ankle Sprain**

### **Patient information leaflet**

### **Emergency Department**

Darent Valley Hospital

Darenth Wood Road

Dartford

Kent

DA2 8DA

01322 428100

[www.dgt.nhs.uk](http://www.dgt.nhs.uk)

Author: Dr Sadia Orakzai

Title: Emergency Department Doctor

Information accurate at time of going to print.

### **What is an ankle sprain?**

A sprain is an injury to the ligaments and muscles caused when the foot is moved through a greater range of movement than normal. This stretches and weakens the ligaments and muscles that support your ankle. Symptoms of an ankle sprain are:

- Tenderness and swelling
- Bruising
- Pain on weight-bearing
- Feeling of instability on that ankle
- Marked bruising and swelling

### **How long will it take to recover?**

The initial pain usually settles after a few days. The soft tissues (muscles and ligaments) normally take around six weeks to heal. This timeframe may vary as everyone recovers from injuries at different rates and some sprains can be worse than others.

You are more likely to sprain your ankle if you have sprained it before and it isn't fully healed. Be careful on uneven surfaces, going up and down stairs, and walking in shoes that are not supportive. You can use simple pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen if you are able.

## **Treating ankle sprains**

For the first 48-72 hours follow the **POLICE** treatment approach:

**Protect** injured ankles from further injury. You may want to use crutches or ankle supports initially to encourage putting weight on your injured foot. Wear supportive, slip-proof footwear.

**Optimum Loading.** You can load, mobilise and use the ankle as pain is tolerated, to help stimulate healing.

**Ice** (an ice pack or bag of frozen peas) wrapped in a towel on your ankle for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours with help reduce the swelling.

**Compression** bandages around your ankle to help limit swelling. **Elevate** the foot above level of hip to reduce ankle swelling.

# Things to avoid

In the first 48 hours after injury avoid the following:

- Hot baths or showers
- Heat packs or heat rubs
- Drinking alcohol
- Massage

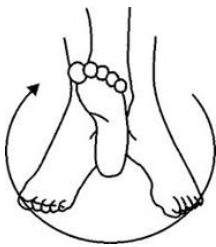
## Exercises for your ankle

After the first 48 hours of injury, perform gentle ankle exercises at least 3 times per day, 10 repetitions for each exercise.

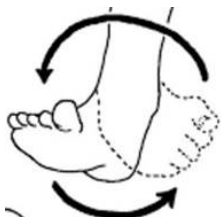
1. Point your foot up and down.



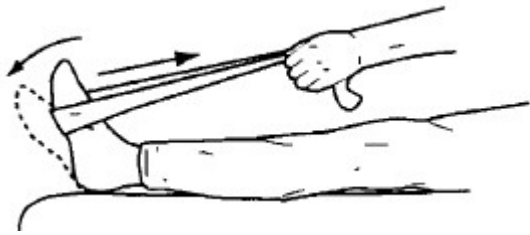
1. Make circles with your foot. Change direction.



1. Place your foot on the floor. Rock your foot from side to side, lifting the inner and then outer border of your foot.



1. Sit with your leg straight out in front of you. Put a towel round your foot and pull it up towards you. Feel a stretch in the back of your calf.



### **When should I seek help?**

The length of time it takes for your ankle to recover depends on the severity of the original injury. It can take a few months to regain full function but your symptoms should not be worsening.

Please visit your GP if:

- - you are unable to put any weight on your injured ankle or when the pain is too severe.
  - you have numbness and/or a cold foot with pale or bluish skin.
  - you have persistent problems with pain, swelling or the ankle is not working properly.

## **Further Support**

For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in centres, or your GP.

NHS website provides online health information and guidance at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

You can visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain/ankle-pain/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain/ankle-pain/) for further information on ankle injuries.

**This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners**

## **Patient Information**

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

# Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: [dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## Patient Property

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/)

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: [www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

Reference Number: 06

First published:

Next review date:

July 2024  
2026

Last Reviewed:

June 2024

July

