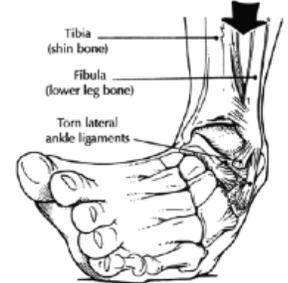




Ankle Sprain

What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain is an injury to the ligaments in the ankle. A ligament is a band of tissue that connects bones at the joint. Sprains can be caused by twisting your ankle either inverted (ankle rolls inward) or everted (ankle rolls outward). The injury may occur during a sport, while walking or any activity that may cause a twisting injury.



Sprains may be graded I, II, or III depending on the severity:

Grade I minimal damage to ligament and patient has minor pain.

Grade II may have mild looseness of joint with more damage to joint.

One may see a large amount of swelling and bruising. Patient does have moderate pain.

Grade III complete tears of ligament and ankle may be unstable. Pain is severe and typically weight bearing is not tolerated.

Signs and symptoms of an ankle sprain

- Pain, ranging from mild to severe
- Joint swelling
- Bruising
- Loss of range of motion
- Inability to walk

Potential Treatment Options for Ankle Sprains There are phases of rehabilitation for ankle sprains. The length of time in each phase will vary. Your healthcare provider will discuss with you if a prescription for formal physical therapy is indicated versus a self-directed home or school program.

- ✓ Rest
- ✓ Ice (20 minutes at a time, as needed for pain)
- ✓ Splint/Lace up ankle brace (crutches as needed)
- ✓ Ace wrap
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen or Aleve
- ✓ Elevation (keep the injured leg elevated above your heart)
- ✓ Exercises and stretching to increase flexibility and restoring range of motion
- ✓ Low impact aerobic training such as walking, riding a bike, elliptical or swimming

What is the recovery time for an ankle sprain? Recovery time will vary from patient to patient. Age, health, previous ankle injuries and severity of ankle sprain will affect recovery time. Location of sprain may also be a factor in the healing process. A Grade I ankle sprain may recover within a few weeks, whereas a Grade III may take 6 weeks or longer.

What are the return to play guidelines? You may return to full activities once you have full range of motion of the ankle, minimal pain, full strength and you can perform sport specific skills at full speed and have been cleared by your physical therapist or physician.

References:

Children's Hospital Colorado Sports Medicine Program for young athletes, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Society of Sports Medicine