Sprains

A sprain is a painful injury that happens when you twist a joint. The pain comes from partial or complete tearing of ligaments. Ligaments hold bones together at the joint. A sprain may cause puffiness (*swelling*) and bruising at the place of injury.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- For the first 24 hours, keep the injured limb raised (*elevated*) on 2 pillows when lying down.
- Put ice on the injured area.
  - Put ice in a plastic bag.
  - Place a towel between your skin and the bag.
  - Leave the ice on for 20 to 30 minutes at a time, 4 to 5 times a day.
  - Do this for the first 24 hours or as told by your doctor.
- If an elastic bandage has been applied, remove and reapply it every 3 to 4 hours. Apply firmly, but not tightly enough to cause the skin to turn bluish in color. If the skin becomes cold, numb or puffs up more, the bandage may be too tight. If any of these things happen, remove the bandage and reapply it more loosely.
- You or your child may need crutches to walk if the sprain is in the lower leg.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and healthy proteins. Eating a healthy diet can help you heal well.
- Take medicine as told by your doctor.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- There is numbness or tingling in the injured limb.
- The toes or fingers in the injured limb become blue or white.
- The sprained limb is cold to the touch.
- There is a sharp, shooting pain in the injured limb.
- The puffiness in the injured limb is getting worse instead of better.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch this condition.
- Will get help right away if you or your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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