Dislocation

A *dislocation* is a condition in which joint surfaces which are normally next to each other are no longer against each other. The bones are out of place.

SYMPTOMS

This is usually associated with pain, swelling and an inability to move the joint. There is also a deformity of the joint.

DIAGNOSIS

This diagnosis is easily made on examination. X-rays are often taken to make sure a *fracture* (break in bone) is not present.

TREATMENT

Joint dislocations need treatment. Treatment is called “reduction” which means putting the bones back in place. If left untreated, they can result in deformities with an unstable joint. Some joint dislocations which result in extensive damage to ligaments, cartilage, and other tissue may require surgery.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the sore area for 15 to 20 minutes, four times per day. Do this while awake, for the first 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and the skin.
- Keep the injured part elevated if possible to lessen swelling.
- Continue activities as directed.
- If a lower extremity was dislocated, use crutches, canes, or walkers as directed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is an increase in bruising, swelling, or pain in the area of the dislocated joint.
- You notice coldness or numbness of the parts beyond the dislocation.
- There is no pain relief from medications.
- There is severe pain.
- It appears or feels like the bones are out of place again.

MAKE SURE YOU:

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

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