Sprains

Your caregiver has diagnosed you as suffering from a sprain. Sprains are painful injuries to the joints as a result of partial or complete tearing of ligaments.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- For the first 24 hours, keep the injured limb raised on 2 pillows while lying down.
- Apply ice bags about every 2 hours for 20 to 30 minutes, while awake, to the injured area for the first 24 hours. Then apply as directed by your caregiver. Place the ice in a plastic bag with a towel around it to prevent frostbite to the skin.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- If an *ace bandage* (stretchy, elastic wrapping bandage) has been applied today, remove and reapply every 3 to 4 hours. Apply firm enough to keep swelling down. Do not apply tightly**. Watch fingers or toes for swelling, bluish discoloration, coldness, numbness, or excessive pain. If any of these *symptoms* (problems) occur, remove the ace bandage and reapply more loosely. Contact your caregiver or return to this location if these symptoms persist.**

Persistent pain and inability to use the injured area for more than 2 to 3 days are warning signs. See a caregiver for a follow-up visit as soon as possible. A hairline *fracture* (this is the same as a broken bone) may not show on x-rays. Persistent pain and swelling indicate that further evaluation, use of crutches, and/or more x-rays are needed. X-rays may sometimes not show a small fracture until a week or ten days later. **Make a follow-up appointment with your own caregiver or to whom we have referred you.** A *radiologist* (a specialist in reading x-rays) will re-read your x-rays. **Make sure you know how to obtain your x-ray results. Do not assume everything is normal if you do not hear from us.**

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- You develop severe pain or more swelling.
- The pain is not controlled with medicine.
- Your skin or nails below the injury turn blue or grey or feel cold or numb.

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