Stirrup Ankle Brace

Stirrup ankle braces give support and help stabilize the ankle joint. They are rigid pieces of plastic or fiberglass that go up both sides of the lower leg with the bottom of the stirrup fitting comfortably under the bottom of the instep (*arch*) of the foot. The brace can be held on with Velcro straps or an elastic (Ace) wrap. Stirrup ankle braces are used to support the ankle following mild or moderate sprains or strains, or fractures after cast removal.

They can be easily removed or adjusted if there is swelling. The rigid brace shells are designed to fit the ankle comfortably and provide the needed medial/lateral stabilization. This brace can be easily worn with most athletic shoes. The brace liner is usually made of a soft, comfortable gel-like material. This gel fits the ankle well without causing uncomfortable pressure points.

IMPORTANCE OF ANKLE BRACES

- The use of ankle bracing is effective in the prevention of ankle sprains.
- In athletes, the use of ankle bracing will offer protection and prevent further sprains.
- Research shows that a complete rehabilitation program needs to be included with external bracing. This includes range of motion and ankle strengthening exercises. Your caregivers will instruct you in this.

If you were given the brace today for a new injury, use the following home care instructions as a guide.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply ice to the sore area for 15 to 20 minutes, four times per day while awake for the first 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin. Never place the ice pack directly on your skin. Be especially careful using ice on an elbow or knee or other bony area, such as your ankle, because icing for too long may damage the nerves which are close to the surface.
- Keep your leg elevated when possible to reduce swelling.
- Wear your splint until you are seen for a follow-up examination. Do not put weight on it. Do not get it wet. You may take it off to take a shower or bath.
- For Activity: Use crutches with non-weight bearing for 1 week. Then, you may walk on your ankle as instructed. Start gradually with weight bearing on the affected ankle.
- Continue to use crutches or cane until you can stand on your ankle without causing pain.
- Wiggle your toes in the splint several times per day if you are able.
- The splint is too tight if you have numbness, tingling, or if your foot becomes cold and blue. Adjust the straps or elastic bandage to make it comfortable.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increased bruising, swelling or pain.
- Your toes are blue or cold and loosening the brace or wrap does not help.
- Your pain is not relieved with medicine.

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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