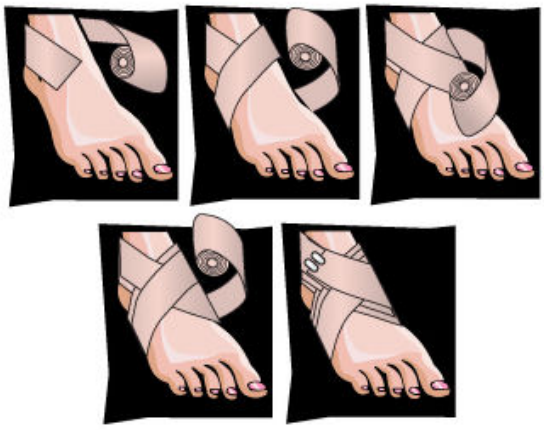
# RICE: Routine Care for Bumps, Bruises, Sprains and Strains

The routine care of many injuries includes **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression, and **E**levation (**RICE**).

- Rest is needed to allow your body to heal. Routine activities can usually be resumed when comfortable. Injured *tendons* (cord-like structures that attach muscle to bone) and bones take approximately six weeks to heal.
- Ice following an injury helps keep the swelling down and reduces pain. Do not apply ice directly to skin. Apply ice bags (ice in a plastic bag with a towel around it to prevent frostbite to skin) about every 2 hours for 20 minutes, while awake, to the injured area for the first 24 hours to 48 hours. After that, continue as directed by your caregiver.
- Compression helps keep swelling down. It also gives support and helps with discomfort. If an *ace bandage* (stretchy, elastic wrapping bandage) has been applied today, it should be removed and reapplied every 3 to 4 hours. It should not be applied tightly, but firmly enough to keep swelling down. **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 loosely. Contact your caregiver or return to this location if these symptoms persist.**



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- Elevation helps reduce swelling and decreases pain. With *extremities* (arms/hands and legs/feet), the injured area should be placed near to or above the heart area if possible.

**Persistent pain and inability to use the injured area for more than 2 to 3 days are warning signs. You should 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 be seen on x-rays. Persistent pain and swelling indicate that further evaluation, possible use of crutches, and/or further 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 the one to whom you have been referred.** A *radiologist* (a specialist in reading x-rays) will re-read your x-rays. **Make sure you know how you are to obtain your x-ray results. Do not assume everything is normal if you do not hear from us.**

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