

Ankle Pain

We were unable to identify an authoritative, non-copyrighted article on elbow pain. However, an excellent article on elbow pain prepared by A.D.A.M., Inc. for the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health is available for free on-line viewing at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003167.htm>. A good article on ankle sprains can be found at <http://www.rice.edu/~jenky/sports/ankle.sprain.html>

To obtain a free copy of the present document, go to www.masterdocs.com.

Causes of ankle pain include:

- **Sprains**: Sprains are the commonest causes of ankle injury and are injuries to ligaments connecting bones, usually because of inwards twisting of the ankle. The ankle swells, appears bruised and you can't stand on that leg. Ankle sprains take weeks or months to heal fully, and even after healing that ankle may be weaker than the other.
- **Other Soft Tissue Injury/Inflammation**: Of tendons (that join muscles to bones), cartilage or blood vessels.
- **Fractures**: Of bones in the area of the ankle.
- **Joint Problems**: Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout (uric acid crystals in joint), pseudogout (calcium deposits in joint), septic arthritis (infection in joint), or psoriatic arthritis (arthritis occurring in people with psoriasis).
- **Referred Pain**: From other parts of the leg or foot.
- **Other Infection**: In the area around the joint.

The acute treatment of an ankle sprain is based on the **RICE** regimen:

- **Rest**: No weight bearing for 24 hours or longer. Also try not to move the ankle.
- **Ice**: Apply ice packs using a towel over a plastic bag to the area that is painful. Be careful to avoid frostbite. Apply ice for ¼ hour every hour for 24 hours.
- **Compression**: An ACE bandage or other soft elastic material should be applied to the ankle to help prevent the development of edema (fluid in the tissues).
- **Elevation**: Elevating the ankle helps in removing edema. By having the foot higher than the hip (or heart), gravity is used to pull edema out of the ankle.

Additional acute therapy of an ankle sprain can include pain relievers such as acetaminophen. Later on, an ankle brace, crutches or a cane, strengthening exercises, and losing excessive weight can help.

Treatment of other causes of ankle pain depends on the cause of the pain.

You may need emergency medical help for:

- Severe pain when NOT bearing weight.
- The joint appears deformed or you think you might have a fracture.
- There was a popping sound just before you developed difficulty using the joint.

Contact your health care provider for:

- Swelling that last for more than 3 days.
- Signs of infection (hot and red ankle, or a fever).
- Pain that is still present after several weeks.

The web page at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003167.htm> states:

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Updated by: David Webner, M.D., Department of Family Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA. Review provided by VeriMed Healthcare Network.

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