

Ankle Sprain

Summary Points to Remember

- Early weight bearing is safe and recommended as soon as possible after an ankle sprain to promote healing
- Use an ice pack regularly for at least **10 days** after injury

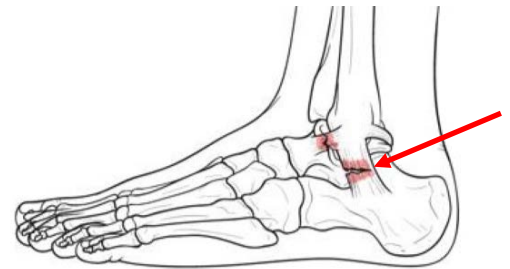
Virtual Fracture Clinic

Your Emergency Department doctor has referred you to the Virtual Fracture Clinic. This allows fast access to a specialist opinion without having to visit the hospital in person.

A Specialist Orthopaedic Surgeon will review your case, then a staff member will contact you by telephone to discuss your management plan.

Your diagnosis is: Ankle Sprain

Ankle sprains are very common. They are usually caused by twisting or rolling the ankle. This may happen playing sport or during a fall.



www.orthoinfo.aaos.org

Early Management: 0-72 hours after the injury

It is normal for your foot and ankle to become bruised and swollen. This will settle over a few weeks.

Follow the 'RICE' guidelines to help pain and swelling:

Rest

Spend some time sitting/lying down. Avoid any activity that increases pain such as long walks or standing for a long time

Ice

Ice the ankle for **20 minutes every 1-2 hours**. Use crushed ice in a damp towel or an ice pack (do not place ice directly on the skin). Continue this for **3-10 days** after your injury

Compression

You can wear a compression bandage or Tubigrip (elastic stocking you can buy at the pharmacy). If you experience pins and needles, numbness, or colour changes in the toes loosen the compression as it may be too tight

Elevation

Position your ankle above the level of your heart



Camboot:

- Occasionally, you may be provided with a camboot to support your ankle while it heals
- Wear the boot for no more than **2 weeks**
- Remove the boot for showers and sleeping if comfortable

To learn how to fit the boot visit:

www.fracturecare.co.uk/general-advice/fitting-your-boot/



Walking:

It is safe to put full weight on your ankle with or without a boot (the medical term for this is 'weight bear as tolerated').

Use crutches to help reduce your pain or assist your balance if needed.



Medication:

Simple medication such as paracetamol or anti-inflammatories may help to control your pain. Speak with your local doctor (GP) or pharmacist about your medication options.

Smoking:

Research shows that smoking increases the risk of poor healing after an injury.

Stopping smoking will improve the chance of a good outcome.

For further information on quitting smoking visit www.quitnow.gov.au or speak with your GP.

Rehabilitation: After 48-72 hours

Exercises:

Gently perform the following exercises **4 times a day**:

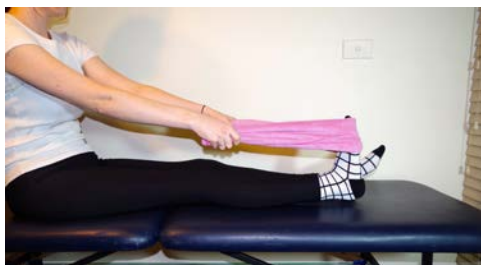
- Point your foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement – repeat 10 times



- Keeping your leg still, turn your feet towards each other then away from each other – repeat 10 times



- Using a towel or scarf gently stretch the foot back towards you – hold for 10 seconds, repeat 5 times



After 1 week/when comfortable:

- Stand near the back of a chair or bench (something stable). Try to balance with all of your weight on the injured leg – hold for 30 seconds, repeat 5 times

To make the exercise harder close your eyes when balancing



Physiotherapy:

If after 6 weeks you are having trouble walking or still need to wear the camboot you may benefit from physiotherapy treatment.

- Speak with your local doctor (GP) about physiotherapy options in your area **or**;
- Contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic to arrange physiotherapy at the hospital (Medicare bulk billed)

Expected return to daily activities

It is important to note that different people recover from injuries at different rates. Most ankle sprains will heal in 6-8 weeks.

Driving:

You can return to driving:

- Automatic car: If your **left** ankle is sprained: immediately. If your **right** ankle is sprained: when you no longer need to wear the boot AND the right leg has enough strength to perform an emergency stop.
- Manual car - When you no longer need to wear the boot AND the right leg has enough strength to perform an emergency stop.

Return to work:

The amount of time you will need off work relates to the severity of your injury and your work requirements.

Discuss your return to work plan with your local doctor and employer.

As a guide:

- Manual workers - If you need to walk on uneven ground or climb it may take up to **6-8 weeks** to return to normal duties.
- Desk workers - you can return as soon as your pain allows.

Return to sport:

It is recommended that you see a physiotherapist for a guided return to sport program.

Longer term recovery and expectations

Most people achieve a normal function after this injury. It is possible that you could have mild ongoing discomfort or feeling of instability.

If you still have significant pain or limitation 3-6 months after your injury despite physiotherapy and rehabilitation you may need to see an orthopaedic specialist. Discuss this with your local doctor.

When to contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic

- **If you have not heard from us TWO working days after your Emergency Department visit**
- If your pain is so bad that medication and RICE (rest, ice, compression and elevation) do not help
- If you notice increasing pain without a cause after it was improving
- If you notice major numbness, pins and needles, or changes in circulation in your foot / ankle
- If your symptoms are still bad after 6 weeks

This brochure provides some information to assist with management and rehabilitation of your injury. While it contains the recommended information, it does not contain all available information about your injury and is not a substitute for specific advice from the Virtual Fracture Clinic in respect of your injury.

All treatment options have risks and benefits. This advice is of a general nature and is appropriate for the majority of patients with this condition. However, it may not apply your specific injury and circumstances.

If you have any concerns about progress of your rehabilitation, contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic promptly.

Do not continue the exercises in the brochure if:

- You experience increasing pain (some discomfort is common)
- Your condition has deteriorated in any way since you last consulted the Virtual Fracture Clinic
- You have a new injury or condition and have not consulted the Virtual Fracture Clinic about it

This information is only designed for patients who are currently being treated by the Virtual Fracture Clinic at The Royal Melbourne Hospital. If you do not understand the information seek clarification from the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

Patients should be aware that the suggested management is not guaranteed to provide any improvement in your condition.

Keep this brochure as you may need to read it again.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact
the Virtual Fracture Clinic

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