Ankle Sprain

Definition
A sprain is an injury to the ligaments around a joint. Ligaments are strong, flexible fibers that hold bones together. When a ligament is stretched too far or tears, the joint becomes painful and swells.

Causes
Sprains are caused when a joint is forced to move into an unnatural position. For example, twisting one’s ankle causes a sprain to the ligaments around the ankle.

Symptoms
• Joint pain or muscle pain
• Swelling
• Joint stiffness
• Discoloration of the skin, especially bruising

First Aid
1. Apply ice immediately to help reduce swelling. Wrap the ice in cloth – Do not place ice directly on the skin.
2. Try not to move the affected area. To help you do this, bandage the affected area firmly, but not tightly. ACE bandages work well. Use a splint, if necessary.
3. Keep the swollen joint elevated above the level of the heart, even while sleeping.
4. Rest the affected joint for several days.

Aspirin, Ibuprofen or other pain relievers can help. Do not give aspirin to children. Keep pressure off the injured area until the pain subsides (usually 7-10 days for mild sprains and 3-5 weeks for severe sprains). You may require crutches when walking.

Rehabilitation to regain the motion and strength of the joint should begin within one week.

When to Contact a Medical Professional
Go to the hospital right away or call 911 if:
• You suspect a broken bone
• The joint appears to be deformed
• You have a serious injury or the pain is severe
• There is a popping sound and immediate difficulty using the joint

Call your doctor if:
• Swelling does not go down within 2 days
• You have symptoms of infection – the area becomes more red, more painful, warm or you have a fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
• The pain does not go away after several weeks

Prevention
• Wear protective footwear for activities that place stress on your ankle and other joints
• Make sure that shoes fit your feet properly
• Always warm up and stretch prior to exercise and sports
• Avoid sports and activities for which you are not conditioned

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 224.273.2416

AMITAhealth.org/SportsMedicine
The AMITA Health Orthopedics Institute is a national leader in musculoskeletal care, offering comprehensive and advanced care for a wide range of conditions. We are proactive about keeping you active. That is why our multi-disciplinary orthopedic teams enlist a comprehensive leading edge approach to the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries.

Our team of highly-experienced board-certified physicians, surgeons, therapists and nurses are dedicated to providing patients of all ages with a personalized treatment program that is customized for your condition, lifestyle and personal preferences.

We work hard to prevent sports-related injuries, which have become increasingly more common among athletes, especially children. AMITA Health Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons keep kids active and participating in the extracurricular activities they enjoy by delivering educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic care.

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 224.273.2416