

Strains and Sprains

Strains are injuries to muscle due to overstretching, while sprains involve a stretch or a partial tear of ligaments (which connect two bones) or tendons (which connect muscle to bone). Sprains and strains happen more often in teens than in younger children.



Signs and Symptoms

- pain in the joint or muscle
- swelling and bruising
- warmth and redness of the injured area
- difficulty moving the injured part



What to Do:

- Make sure the child stops activity right away.
- Think **R.I.C.E.** for the first 48 hours after the injury:
 - **Rest:** Rest the injured part until it's less painful.
 - **Ice:** Wrap an icepack or cold compress in a towel and place over the injured part immediately. Continue for no more than 20 minutes at a time, four to eight times a day.
 - **Compression:** Support the injured part with an elastic compression bandage for at least 2 days.
 - **Elevation:** Raise the injured part above heart level to decrease swelling.
- Give the child ibuprofen or acetaminophen for pain and to reduce swelling.

Seek Emergency Medical Care if the Child Has:

- severe pain when the injured part is touched or moved
- continued trouble bearing weight
- increased bruising
- numbness or a feeling of "pins and needles" in the injured area
- a limb that looks "bent" or misshapen
- signs of infection (increased warmth, redness, streaks, swelling, and pain)
- a strain or sprain that doesn't seem to be improving after 5 to 7 days



Think Prevention!

Teach kids to warm up properly and to stretch before and after exercising or participating in any sport, and make sure they **always wear appropriate protective equipment.**

Notes from the Nurse: _____
