

Ankle sprain

This is a stretch or small tear of one or more of the ligaments in the ankle joint. Ligaments are strong, fibrous bands that connect bones in a joint. The most common sprain affects the ligaments on the outside of the ankle. It causes moderate to severe ankle pain, swelling, and difficulty moving and walking.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask you how the sprain occurred and what symptoms you have. They will then examine your ankle and, if they suspect a fracture, request an X-ray.

How is it treated?

- Apply ice for 20 minutes every 3 to 4 hours. Do this for 2 to 3 days or until the pain subsides.



- Depending on the severity of the sprain, if necessary, a bandage or other type of support will be applied to prevent the swelling from getting worse.

- Use crutches until you can put weight on your foot.
- If your doctor prescribes an anti-inflammatory medication, you can take it.
- When you are able to walk, do exercises to strengthen your ankle and improve its mobility:
 - Move your ankle up and down; then make circles in both directions with the tip of your foot.
 - Walking on the sand at the beach is very beneficial.
 - Once healed, walk on your toes and heels for 5 minutes a day for a few days.
- In rare cases, ankle sprains cause a complete tear of the ligaments and require surgery.

How long does it take to heal?

The duration depends on several factors (age, severity of the sprain, and whether you have had previous injuries to the same ankle).

- A mild sprain can improve in less than a week.
- A moderate sprain can take 2 to 4 weeks to recover.
- A severe sprain can take 6 weeks or more.

Can I prevent it?

- Wear appropriate footwear that fits well, both at home and outdoors or when exercising.
- Perform appropriate stretching exercises before and after sports activities.
- To prevent it from happening again, do not strain your ankle until it is fully recovered and follow the exercises to strengthen it as indicated above.