

Sprains

Cause:

Sudden twisting injury to a joint.

Treatment:

Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation (R.I.C.E.)

Rest:

Avoid using the joint, especially for weight-bearing activities; use crutches for ankle or knee sprains.

Ice:

Apply ice packs or cold compresses the first 24 to 48 hours after your injury. After 48 hours, switch to a hot pack (such as a small towel immersed in hot water and put in plastic bag and covered by another small towel).

Compression:

Wrap joint such as knee or ankle with elastic bandage; splint fingers to immobilize them.

Elevation:

Raise the swollen joint above the level of your heart to reduce swelling, especially at night.

Prevention:

Do stretching exercises before exercising. Chronically weak muscles may need a muscle development program to avoid recurrent sprains. Ask your healthcare provider for more information. To make an appointment at Student Health Services, call 910.521.6219.

