

Bristol Community Health



## Patient information

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Bristol Community Health

# Podiatry Department

Sprains, strains and general pains



**L24**

## **Sprains, strains and general pains**

There are many reasons why you may have a painful foot or ankle – usually due to an injury of the muscles or bones, e.g. a sprained ankle or a fractured toe bone.

These may be caused by an accident in the home or from playing sports.

A sprain can be very painful. The foot and ankle can become swollen and bruised and you may not be able to move it as well. Even light pressure on the foot when standing may be painful.

Occasionally a severe injury may require an x-ray or even a plaster cast. However, in the majority of cases, this is not required and a few simple steps carried out at home can relieve the discomfort.

### **Rest**

As with all injuries, rest is vital to allow the muscle or bone to mend.

### **Elevation**

Sit with your foot up. This should be higher than the seat height of your chair. This decreases the amount of swelling that occurs in the foot and ankle.

### **Ice**

Applying something cold to the area decreases the local inflammation and the amount of pain that occurs in the area. A frozen bag of peas can be wrapped in a tea towel and applied to the area for 10 – 20 minutes. The frozen peas should be wrapped in a tea towel to prevent burning the skin.

**NB People with impaired circulation should not apply anything cold to their skin.**

### **Compression**

A crepe bandage or tubigrip (size C and D) can be applied to the area to decrease the localised swelling. This should be removed at night and reapplied the next morning.

### **Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs**

Painkillers that have an anti-inflammatory element will also help, e.g. Ibuprofen. **These should be taken following the manufacturer's advice.**

If this advice is followed, symptoms should decrease within a couple of days. If symptoms persist, seek help from your GP.