

Orthopaedic Connection

Ankle Sprain

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

An ankle sprain is one of the most common injuries in both children and adults. Hardly a week goes by that I don't see one or two in the office.

O.K., I can see you rolling your eyes and thinking this will be really boring. Everybody knows about or has had a sprained ankle, right? But, I am sure there are some things you don't know.....so read on please.

What Is It?

One minute you're fine and the next you tripped or stepped onto an uneven surface. Wham! Pain and you can hardly put any weight on your foot. It feels like it won't hold you up. Say hello to a sprained ankle! You can only hope you didn't break it.

Ankle sprains range from a minor stretch with momentary pain to a very serious injury that tears multiple ligaments that needs my evaluation and treatment.

Signs and Symptoms

- Sudden pain on the outer aspect of the ankle
- Popping may be heard
- You have trouble moving your ankle and foot
- Painful to bear weight
- Swelling begins
- Bruise appears later that day or the next

Standard Treatment

Some people tough it out. Others go to the Emergency Room where they spend 4 hours or more (fuming). They are briefly examined, an x-ray is taken, the nurse comes back saying the x-ray is "negative". She quickly wraps your ankle in an Ace bandage and puts you in a wheel chair so you can leave and says "call your doctor in 72 hours if you still hurt." Sigh.

Well, at least the x-ray ruled out a fracture so I guess there is some good to it.

Best Treatment

If your sprain is minor you will probably get better with no treatment at all. If you have a more serious sprain proper evaluation and treatment are important.

- The foot and ankle should be thoroughly examined.
- Plain x-rays of the foot and ankle are taken.

- Crutches and restricted weight bearing.
- Immobilization - ideally a splint to limit motion.
- Ice, elevation.
- Follow up evaluation in 2 - 3 days.
- For grade 2 and 3 sprains (more severe) I often prescribe an air cast walking brace.
- I don't use the plastic stirrup device very much.
- Stress x-ray exam when comfortable enough to rule out major ankle ligament damage.
- Motrin or Advil for pain and inflammation.

What Else?

We are out of time and I'm only in the middle of ankle sprains.

"High Ankle sprain"

Hidden fracture

Children's ankle "sprains"

Length of treatment

Rehabilitation

Surgery

Recurrent ankle sprains

And you thought it was all over after the 4 plus hours in the ER and the ace bandage from the nurse!

Hope to see you next week.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website

What if I told you all the musculoskeletal information you need is in one place? It is! Log on to www.orthopodsurgeon.com and you will find -

- The office website and library
- Your Orthopaedic Connection
- Gratiot County Herald Archive of every article I have written (complete text at the click of a mouse).

It contains tons of information you or someone in your family can use.

All of the information available contains what I am treating daily in the office and hospital. I urge you to log on and check it out.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush