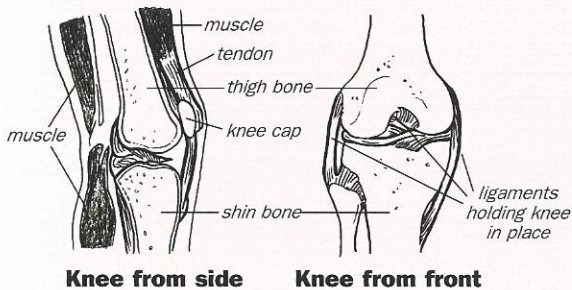


SPRAINS & STRAINS

Anyone can get injured playing sport, or just doing normal daily activities. You can prevent some injuries and early treatment can help a quick recovery. Common injuries usually involve soft tissues - muscles, tendons or ligaments.



MUSCLES allow the body to move.

Strain - when muscle fibres are pulled apart causing pain, reduced movement and sometimes swelling.

Contusion - damage to blood vessels in muscles followed by bleeding, bruising and sometimes clotting.

TENDONS join muscles to bone.

Tendonitis - overuse of tendons - strain when over-stretched.

Tenosynovitis - pain, swelling and sometimes a 'crackling' sound when moving because tendon is irritated and inflamed.

LIGAMENTS join bones together to support joints in place.

Sprain - when ligament is stretched or torn by a joint being wrenched or twisted e.g. sprained ankle. Pain, tenderness and swelling around the joint sometimes followed by bruising and difficulty with movement.

FIRST AID

- **R**est and support the injured part to stop further damage.
- **I**ce the injury until area becomes numb or the skin becomes pink (20 minutes). Use a packet of frozen peas, ice blocks or a cold pack (ask your pharmacist). Wrap ice or ice packs in a cold, damp cloth to avoid 'burning' the skin. Ice reduces pain, inflammation and bruising. You can re-apply the ice every 3-4 hours for around the first 48-72 hours or for as long as the area around the injury remains warm to touch, swollen or very painful.
- **C**ompression - apply a firm compression bandage to help the swelling go down. Keep bandaged while there is still swelling, taking care not to apply the bandage too tightly.
- **E**levation - if possible, keep the injured part above the level of the heart to help reduce the swelling. This is most important in the first 24-48 hours for severe injuries and while applying ice.
- **R**efer also to your doctor or physiotherapist for advice and ongoing care.

IMPORTANT

For the first 48 - 72 hours after an injury, or while the injury still causes severe and/or sharp pain and is swollen, avoid:

- heat - it increases bleeding
- alcohol - it increases swelling
- exercise - some forms can make the injury worse (ask a physiotherapist)
- massage - it increases swelling and bleeding.

A break (fracture) or dislocation can be painful, swollen, look strange, or be hard to move properly. It is sometimes hard to tell if your injury is a sprain, break or dislocation without having an X-ray. If you are not sure, support the injured part and seek medical attention.

MEDICINES

Ask your pharmacist and doctor to recommend the right medicine for you.

- Pain relievers can help reduce pain and swelling (see *Pain Relievers* Fact Card).
- Anti-inflammatory creams, gels and sprays will help reduce pain and swelling. Avoid heat rubs and liniments for the first 48 hours after the injury or while the injury is still quite painful, swollen or warm.
- Don't use pain relievers or local anaesthetic sprays to relieve pain so you can continue to exercise with an injury.

SELF CARE

Preventing injury

- Wear the right footwear and clothing when playing sport or exercising.
- Keep flexible (see *Exercises for Flexibility* Fact Card).
- To prevent injuries, warm up for about 15 minutes before exercise e.g. walk.
- Always stretch before and after sport or exercise. It's best to stretch when muscles are warm (not cold). Find out how to do stretches properly so they're helpful and won't cause any further harm (ask a physiotherapist).
- Cool down after exercise.
- Don't play sport or do strenuous exercise when tired, if you feel unwell, when recovering from an illness or if you haven't gradually trained up.
- Some medicines can make you dizzy or slow your reactions - ask your pharmacist.
- Reduce your risk of falls - have your eyesight and balance checked, secure loose mats and rugs etc. (see *Preventing Falls* Fact Card).

Recovering from injury

- Gradually begin exercising again when injury has healed.
- As pain and swelling go away, increase your level of exercise, e.g. progress from walking to running.
- Supportive strapping may be necessary to reduce risk of re-injury (ask your physiotherapist).

Sporting injuries

- Make sure the injury is fully healed before returning to full exercise - check with your doctor or physiotherapist.
- Have a sports first-aid kit on hand while playing and training (ask your pharmacist).
- Avoid drinking alcohol, especially before a game or training, or while the injury is acutely painful and warm and swollen.

Other relevant Fact Cards:

- *Pain Relievers*
- *Exercises for Flexibility*
- *Preventing Falls*

Contact:

Your doctor - listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book

A physiotherapist - at your nearest public hospital, local Community Health Centre or look in the yellow pages of the phone book

Your Self Care pharmacist. To find:

ACT	(02) 6283 4703	NSW	(02) 9437 5941
TAS	(03) 6231 2636	VIC	(03) 9903 9600
QLD	(07) 3844 4900	WA	(08) 9388 2886
SA	(08) 8272 1211		

In case of poisoning, phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask your pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

Your **Self Care** pharmacist

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

DAVID S. NOLTE PHARMACY 701 - 703 RATHDOWNE ST., NTH CARLTON PH: 9349 1522 • 3049L

