

Manage injury with PRICEMM

When an athlete suffers a mild sports injury, there is usually:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Limited range of motion
- Loss of strength

Treat an injury soon after it happens to:

- Limit swelling and ongoing tissue damage.
- Maintain range of motion.
- Return the athlete to the playing field as quickly and safely as possible.

PRICEMM is an easy way to remember how to treat a sports injury.

Protection: This simply means remove the athlete from the game to avoid further injury. All too often, young athletes are taught to “suck it up” and play through the pain. Players and coaches need to understand pain is the body’s way of saying something is wrong. Activity should be stopped right away.

Rest: For the first 24 hours after a sports injury, the athlete should limit use of the injured body part. This can be done by using a sling, brace, wrap or crutches. Resting the injured body part will decrease further tissue damage. After 24 hours, the athlete may begin mild range-of-motion exercises—as directed by a doctor, physical therapist or athletic trainer—to prevent stiffness or to help form a strong, flexible scar.



Ice: Ice is the No. 1 treatment for acute sports injuries. Crushed ice should be applied directly to the injured body part right after the injury occurs, if possible. Ice should be applied for 20 minutes every one to four hours. Crushed ice in a zip-top bag with a small amount of water—or bags of frozen peas or corn—can be applied directly to the skin. Avoid commercial gel packs because they get much colder than ice. If a gel pack is used, place a cloth or towel between the pack and the skin to prevent frostbite. Ice should be applied for at least 48 to 72 hours after a sports injury and longer if swelling continues. **Do not apply heat within the first 72 hours after a sports injury.** This will increase blood flow and fluid leakage and worsen swelling.

Compression: Direct pressure can limit swelling. Use elastic wraps, braces or ice bags to apply pressure. One treatment for ankle sprains is the use of a horseshoe-shaped felt pad held by an elastic wrap over the outside ankle bone. This has been shown to reduce swelling and improve movement.

Elevation: Raising the injured body part above the heart helps drain extra fluid away from the injury site.

Motion: The athlete can begin mild range-of-motion exercises 24 hours after a sports injury. This should be done without placing weight on the injury and in a way that does not cause severe pain. For example, an athlete with a sprained ankle should use his big toe to trace all capital letters of the alphabet while seated in a chair.

Medicine: Medicines, such as ibuprofen and naproxen, help with swelling and pain relief. These can be taken about 72 hours after an injury. Rest, ice, compression and elevation should provide enough pain control at first.



Visit **choa.org/sportsmed** for locations and more information about our Sports Medicine Program.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice. Always consult with a doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about the health of a child.

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