



Polyclinics
SingHealth

Ankle Sprain



*Disclaimer: Please note that the instructions shown are strictly for general information only.
If you have any queries, kindly check with your healthcare provider.*



SCAN ME



What is an ankle sprain?

An ankle sprain refers to an injury of the ligaments at the ankle.

The ankle ligaments provide stability to the ankle joint.

The most common site for ankle sprain is on the outer region of the ankle.

Lateral ankle sprain





What are the common causes of ankle sprain?

The ankle ligaments are injured when they are overstretched.

This commonly occurs when the foot and ankle are forcibly rolled inwards.

Factors that increase the risk of ankle sprain include:

- Uneven surfaces or poor field conditions
- Improper shoes
- Poor strength, balance control or flexibility in the ankle
- Sports injury
- Had a previous ankle injury or sprain



What are the signs & symptoms of ankle sprain?

- A snap, crack or tear may be heard upon injury
- Pain on the ankle, most commonly on the outside and front of the ankle
- Difficulty in walking due to pain
- Depending on the severity, the ankle may swell - swelling may be immediate or occur over a period of hours
- Bruising may develop over a few days, it may extend up the leg and down to the toes



D How long does it take to recover?

Acute pain usually settles within 1 to 2 weeks. Most ankle sprains heal without complications in a few weeks.

Depending on the severity of the injury, some ankle sprains may take longer to recover.

After an injury, your ankle may feel stiff, weak or unstable. Without proper treatment and engaging in strenuous activities too soon can cause repeated sprains. This may then result in chronic ankle pain, instability and arthritis in the ankle joint.

E You should seek medical attention early if you have...

- Intense ankle pain or movement restriction following a fall or trauma
- Difficulty walking or weight bear (support body weight) on the injured leg
- Prolonged morning ankle stiffness
- A hot swollen ankle joint
- Rapid worsening of ankle pain



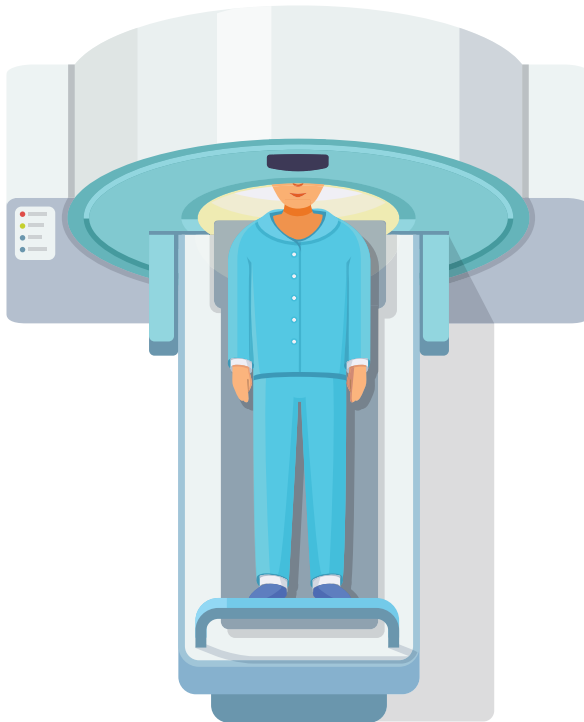


Do you need an imaging scan?

Imaging scan is not needed to diagnose ankle sprain. Diagnosis can be made clinically with history and physical examination.

X-ray is ordered when bone fracture is suspected.



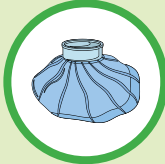


Further imaging scan like ultrasound scan, Computed Tomography (CT) or Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) may be ordered by specialists only when necessary.







Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

What are the treatment options?





If you have an acute muscle strain or sprain, try the **POLICE** principles to reduce pain and help with recovery.

P	O L	I	C	E
Protect	Optimal Loading	Ice	Compression	Elevation
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect your painful area from further injury • Rest the injured area for a short period of time (e.g. 1 to 3 days), but avoid prolonged immobility which may lead to joint stiffness • Depending on the condition, you may consider using some form of support (e.g. bandage, brace, splint) or crutches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right amount of activity can stimulate healing • Gradually build up your range of movement and try putting weight on the injured limb • Get active early when you can tolerate it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply cold pack (e.g. a bag of ice wrapped in a towel), onto the painful area • Do this for about 10 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for the first few days to reduce pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compress the injured area using a bandage to reduce swelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put your injured leg on a chair or cushion to reduce swelling

Avoid **HARM** for the first few days of your injury.

H	A	R	M
Heat	Alcohol	Running	Massage
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not use heat rub, heat pack, take hot showers or saunas after an injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consuming alcohol can worsen the swelling and slow down recoveryIt also increases the risk of you hurting yourself again	<ul style="list-style-type: none">After an injury, right amount of exercise can promote healingHowever, strenuous activity such as running may cause further injury and worsen pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not massage the injured area for the first day or two, because it can cause bruising and more swelling

After the initial **POLICE** treatment, your healthcare provider may recommend:

Activity modification and ankle support	Medications	Physiotherapy	Specialist referral
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce your activity when the pain is intense• Get active early when you can tolerate it• Strapping, taping and bracing the ankle to provide additional support and prevent recurrent sprains at early healing stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can reduce pain and inflammation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate exercise programme can improve your pain and regain your ankle functions - (e.g. flexibility, balance control, strengthening and conditioning exercises)• Therapeutic modalities such as therapeutic ultrasound or extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ankle sprain usually does not need specialist treatment.• Your doctor will only refer you to see a specialist when necessary for further investigation and treatment such as surgery.

