

# SPRAIN, STRAIN & POSSIBLE FRACTURE

What to do next

**1 Home** (*Self Care*)  
to rest and follow RICED guidelines if minor swelling or bruising.

**2 General Practice (GP)**  
if in pain (despite pain relief) and can't use limb as normal.

**3 ED** (*Emergency Department*)  
if in severe pain and limb is pale, cold and/or deformed.



# SPRAIN, STRAIN & POSSIBLE FRACTURE

*Muscle strains and ligament sprains are common injuries among children. Both can cause pain and swelling. Sprains and strains are often best treated by following the R.I.C.E.D approach.*

## What to do

### REST:

- Rest reduces further damage.
- Avoid moving the injured part as much as possible and keep weight off it.

### ICE:

- Ice reduces pain, swelling and bleeding.
- Wrap ice in a damp towel – don't put ice directly onto bare skin.
- Keep ice on the injury for 20 minutes every 2 hours during the day for the first 48 hours.

### COMPRESSION:

- Bandaging helps reduce swelling and bleeding.
- Bandage the injury firmly in between ice treatments.

### ELEVATION:

- Elevation helps stop bleeding and reduce swelling.
- Raise the injured limb on a pillow for comfort and support.

### DIAGNOSIS:

- Call your general practice (GP) if you're worried about the injury (see next section).

## Call your general practice (GP) if:

- your child is still in pain after taking pain relief medicine (eg. paracetamol)
- the swelling and pain have not eased
- your child can't use the limb as normal
- your child is holding the limb to look after it or protect it from being knocked.

## Take your child to ED if:

- your child is in severe pain after taking pain relief
- the limb is pale, cold and/or deformed looking.

For more information call Healthline on **0800 611 116** or visit [healthnavigator.org.nz](http://healthnavigator.org.nz).