



right away. If rehabilitation is delayed, the injury may be less likely to heal properly.

In evaluating your injury, the foot and ankle surgeon will take your history to learn more about the injury. He or she will examine the injured area, and may order x-rays, an MRI study, or a CT scan to help determine the severity of the injury.

Non-surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation

When you have an ankle sprain, rehabilitation is crucial—and it starts the moment your treatment begins. Your foot and ankle surgeon may recommend one or more of the following treatment options:

- **Immobilization.** Depending on the severity of your injury, you may receive a short-leg cast, a

walking boot, or a brace to keep your ankle from moving. You may also need crutches.

- **Early physical therapy.** Your doctor will start you on a rehabilitation program as soon as possible to promote healing and increase your range of motion. This includes doing prescribed exercises.
- **Medications.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation. In some cases, prescription pain medications are needed to provide adequate relief.
- **Icing.** You may be advised to ice your injury several times a day until the pain and swelling resolves. Wrap ice cubes, or a bag of frozen peas or corn, in a thin towel. Do not put ice directly on your skin.

- **Compression wraps.** To prevent further swelling, you may need to keep your ankle wrapped in an elastic bandage or stocking.

When Is Surgery Needed?

In more severe cases, surgery may be required to adequately treat an ankle sprain. Surgery often involves repairing the damaged ligament or ligaments. The foot and ankle surgeon will select the surgical procedure best suited for your case based on the type and severity of your injury as well as your activity level.

After surgery, rehabilitation is extremely important. Completing your rehabilitation program is crucial to a successful outcome. Be sure to continue to see your foot and ankle surgeon during this period to ensure that your ankle heals properly and function is restored. ▲



**American College of
Foot and Ankle Surgeons**

This information has been prepared by the Consumer Education Committee of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, a professional society of 5,800 foot and ankle surgeons. Members of the College are Doctors of Podiatric Medicine who have received additional training through surgical residency programs.

The mission of the College is to promote superior care of foot and ankle surgical patients through education, research and the promotion of the highest professional standards.

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