

Caring for your... Knee Injury

KNEE INJURIES are due to either a stretch or tear of one or more tissues (ligaments or cartilage) in the knee. Your health professional will assess the severity of your injury and advise you about the treatment you need.

Return to see your health professional immediately if you have significant, rapid swelling at any stage following injury The first 2-3 days for pain and swelling Remember – R.I.C.E.

Rest – reduce the length of time you spend standing and walking as this helps the knee heal.

Ice – Place ice wrapped in a damp towel on the injured knee – don't put ice directly onto bare skin as it may cause an ice burn. Apply for up to 20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 2-3 days.

Compression – Firm (not tight) bandaging helps reduce swelling. Remove the bandage at night.

Elevation – Keeping your injured leg raised and straight on a pillow helps reduce bleeding and swelling.

Avoid

H – heat eg. hot showers, hot packs

A – alcohol

R – running

M - massage

(These things may slow your recovery)



Avoid taking aspirin as this can increase bleeding. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice. The time it takes to recover depends on the type and amount of damage to the knee.

Paracetamol can help with pain.

After 3 days It is important to try to walk normally (heel to toe – try not to limp) and to start activities that help to get your knee moving again. Cycling, swimming (not breaststroke), aqua jogging and walking, are activities that may be recommended by your health professional. Pain and swelling may take up to 7 days to settle.

When to seek extra help Sometimes you may have a knee injury that takes longer to get better and will need extra help. You should see a health professional (e.g. doctor or physiotherapist) if:

- pain and swelling do not settle after 7 days and/or gets worse with walking
- you get numbness or tingling in the calf or foot
- you have trouble putting weight on your leg
- vour knee gives way unexpectedly
- vou are worried about vour knee injury
- your knee locks up (you have difficulty straightening or bending it).

Getting back to activity This depends on your injury. It is important to follow your health professional's instructions. If you are unsure what activities are safe, always ask for advice.

To help your recovery your health professional may suggest a rehabilitation programme including specific exercises to help you get back to everyday activities and/or sports. If you play sport, your health professional will advise you when it is safe to play sport again. Starting too early or without proper care can increase the chance of another sprain or of having problems later.

Wearing a brace is generally not required for most knee injuries.

Think positively Keep reminding yourself that you will get better. With proper care most knee injuries heal well. Following your health professional's advice will give you the greatest chance of a quick and full recovery.

Tips to prevent another sprain

- Stav fit
- Wear proper, well-fitting shoes
- Always warm-up, cool-down and stretch before and after physical activity
- Keep doing the strengthening and balancing exercises recommended by your health professional
- When playing sport, use the correct technique when landing from jumps and when changing direction, to avoid twisting your knee
- Prepare for sport with pre-season fitness training.

Further information on knee injuries and correct sports techniques is available online at www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention or can be ordered from ACC on o8oo 8o2444

Personal instructions
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Important phone numbers