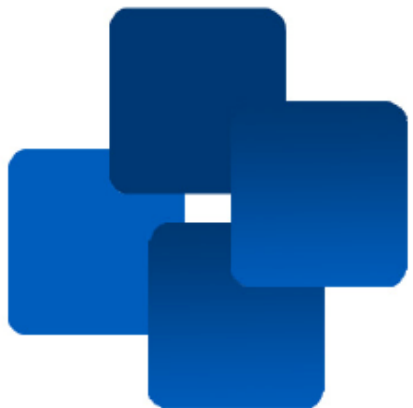


# Soft Tissue Injury

## Child Health Patient Information Leaflet



## Introduction

Your child has visited the CED / MIU with an injury that has been diagnosed as a soft tissue injury.

The term 'soft tissue' refers to ligaments, tendons, muscles and fat, it does not include fractures. Soft tissue injuries therefore refers to a wide collection of injury types that include cuts, bruises, sprains and strains.

The term soft tissue injury is an imprecise diagnosis, a generalised term, but it is a useful one to use in clinical practice because it tends to define how we treat this type of injury. These injuries are common in the ankle, knee, shoulder and wrist.

A **Sprain** is caused by over stretching and tearing of a ligament and can vary in severity from a few torn fibres to a complete rupture. These injuries are categorised as types 1, 2 and 3 or minor, moderate and severe.

There will be varying amounts of swelling, bruising and tenderness around the area. Most sprains are types 1 and 2.

A **Strain** is caused by a torn muscle and are described in the same way as a sprain.

## Treatment for Soft Tissue Injuries

Previous advice was to use support bandages for soft tissue injuries. However, this is no longer the case after recent research shows this can cause more pain by putting uneven pressure over the affected area, stopping use of the area, making it become stiff.

Care of the injured area needs to be taken for the first few days:

- Rest the injured part for 3 days.
- Take pain-killers, such as Paracetamol and / or Ibuprofen.

- Applying ice to the injured area is good for pain relief - Frozen peas in a bag (covered in a cloth) or an ice pack made using a plastic bag with some ice and water in it. **Never** place the ice directly on the skin because it can burn the skin. You should always wrap the ice or icepack in a tea towel or a pillow case. Never apply for longer than 10-15 minutes, 3-4 times a day.
- For swelling the best treatment is to elevate the injured part.
- We encourage you to move the joints on either side of the injury gently. Movement is good.

The most common soft tissue injuries children have requiring exercises are the ankle, knee and wrist.

## **Ankle Injuries**

Crutches are not recommended for most ankle injuries but care needs to be taken on the first few days.

- Take a letter from your parent to school to see if you can have special arrangements for the first few days to avoid too much walking at school.
- It is advised that you elevate your leg when sitting and avoid too much standing.
- When sleeping keep your ankle up on a couple of pillows.

### **Do regular exercises to keep you ankle joint from getting stiff:**

- Wiggle your toes.
- Move your foot up and down, pointing toes to the sky then to the floor, stretching the ankle and foot.

After 3-4 days draw circles in the air with your foot.

After 5-7 days start some ankle strengthening exercises.

Repeat each of the following exercises 10 times and try to do them all 3-4 times a day:

- Stand on your tip toes and then put your heels back on the floor. Keep going up and down.
- Stand like a wrestler with your legs bent at the knees and lift one foot at a time.
- Test your balance - stand on one leg then go up onto tip toes, repeat on the other leg.

## **Knee Injuries**

As soon as your pain allows after a knee injury, you must start some exercises to make your thigh muscles nice and strong as these muscles help your knee to stay strong.

Repeat each of the following exercises 10 times and try to do them all 3-4 times a day:

- Sit on the edge of a chair and gently swing your legs to get your knees moving.
- Lying on your bed lift your legs up as high as you can but keep your knees straight this time.
- Try and make your muscles at the top of your legs (your thighs) go hard and relax again. Do this both sitting and lying down, three times a day.

## Wrist Injuries

As soon as your pain allows after a wrist injury, follow these exercises:

- Wiggle your fingers.
- Move your fingers - see if you can touch one finger at a time with your thumb.
- Moving only your wrist, wave your hand from side to side and up and down.
- **After 3-4 days** draw circles in the air with your hand, moving your wrist.

Repeat these at least 10 times each, 3-4 times a day.

## Things to remember

A return to early mobility is encouraged with soft tissue injuries. Prolonged immobility is harmful and counterproductive.

Do seek the advice of your doctor if:

- The pain is not settling down after 7-10 days with regular analgesia (pain relief)
- Or if it is getting worse for no apparent reason.
- You are concerned that things are not right.

## Important Note

**The pain from a soft tissue injury is likely to increase over the first 24-72 hours, therefore it is important to give regular analgesia (pain relief).**

## **Pain Relief**

Regular pain relief is advised. Paracetamol (Calpol) can be given every 4-6 hours up to four times a day and Ibuprofen (Nurofen) every 6-8 hours, up to three times a day. Please read the bottle for the correct dose for your child according to their age.

**Analgesia given:**

**Paracetamol next due at** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ibuprofen next due at** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions you may like to ask:**

## Further information can be obtained from:

NHS 111

Dial 111

Or contact your GP

Bluebell Ward,  
Lister Hospital, Stevenage

01438 284008

Children's A&E, Lister

01438 284333

Urgent Care Centre, New QEII Hospital,  
Welwyn Garden City

01707 247549

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

01438 285811

The information in this leaflet was taken from [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) and adapted from current East and North Herts NHS Trust adult leaflets

**[www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk)**

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