



Mersey and West Lancashire  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

# **Ankle Sprains and Avulsion Fractures**



## **WHAT IS AN ANKLE SPRAIN?**

An ankle sprain is an injury to the ligaments surrounding the ankle joint. This often occurs when the ankle is forced to bend more than normal, stretching the ligaments and soft tissues which hold the ankle and foot bones in place. In a severe sprain, the ligaments may be partially or completely torn.

## **WHAT IS AN AVULSION FRACTURE?**

Occasionally a small piece/flake of bone may be pulled off, where the ligament attaches to the bone. These are minor fractures and are stable, so you will not need a plaster cast. You may be given a supportive boot or brace to wear for up to six weeks.

Avulsion fractures are treated in the same way as a sprain.

These fractures may take several weeks to heal, whilst you may expect pain and swelling for up to a few months.

These injuries are not routinely followed up at hospital. Swelling and bruising at the fracture site is normal.

In the early days after the injury, R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) reduces the inflammation of the ankle.

### **You should:**

- Take pain killers as needed to keep pain levels under control.

- Rest initially with the foot elevated to bring the swelling down.
- Ice can be applied. Wrap a bag of ice in a tea towel & apply for 15 minutes three to four times a day.
- Wear supportive footwear as recommended, this can be removed at night and when resting.
- Weight bear as the pain allows.
- Gently start to move ankle as pain allows to prevent stiffness.

### **You should NOT:**

- Drive wearing the walking boot as you will void your insurance should you have an accident. Only return to driving when you are comfortable walking and can do an emergency stop.

### **WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AND WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY ANKLE TO HEAL?**

As soon as the acute pain and swelling settles normal walking is allowed. It is advisable to wear flat shoes and avoid walking around on uneven ground.

More strenuous and sporting activities can be introduced gradually when the pain and swelling has settled down and normal walking is comfortable.

Minor sprains recover within a few weeks and do not need specific treatment. More severe sprains may take longer to settle, and sometimes physiotherapy helps in recovering joint movements, muscle strength and stability.

It may take several months for the ankle to feel normal again and for the swelling to disappear completely.

Occasionally the ankle sprain continues to be painful even after several months. In this situation seeking further advice is advisable.

**Please remember:**

Contact your GP if your condition is not improving, or if your pain relief is not adequate.

**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.**

## **MATRON**

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

- Your own GP

### **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ  
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN  
Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

We would welcome your feedback about your experience  
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.  
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following  
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-  
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

**Thank you**

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