

RICER: first aid for sprains, strains and fractures

RICER first aid: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, Referral



Sprains, strains and fractures can happen easily after accidents or falls, or during sport or other physical activities.



When an injury happens, there can be some internal bleeding and swelling in the injured area. Too much swelling can cause more damage.

R - Rest
I - Ice
C - Compression
E - Elevation
R - Referral

Use RICER first aid for up to 72 hours after a sprain, strain or fracture. It can limit swelling and help speed up recovery.

Rest, Ice, Compression



R - Rest
After injury, stop your child playing or moving. Movement can increase bleeding and swelling and slow healing. Call 000 if you think it's a fracture.



I - Ice
Use an ice pack to reduce pain and swelling around the injury. Apply ice for 15-20 minutes every 2 hours for up to 72 hours after injury.



C - Compression
Bandage the area firmly (but not too tightly) around, above and below the wound. Overlap each layer by half. Immobilise limb if you think it's a fracture.

Elevation, Referral



E - Elevation
Keep the injured area elevated. Keep legs above hips by putting the leg on a chair, pillow or stool. Use a sling for arm injuries.



R - Referral
Have the injury checked by a doctor. The doctor might ask for X-rays, ultrasounds or CT scans to diagnose the injury and plan treatment.



In the first 48-72 hours after an injury, don't use treatments like heat or hot rubs. Also avoid moderate or intense activity and massage.