

Foot Pain: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Foot injuries that cause pain and swelling are fairly common. Almost all sports or home repair projects can cause a misstep that ends up as foot pain. Normal wear and tear, especially as you get older, also can cause foot pain.

Most minor foot injuries will heal on their own, and home treatment is usually all you need to do. If you have a severe injury, you may need tests and treatment.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Rest and protect your foot. Take a break from any activity that may cause pain.
- Put ice or a cold pack on your foot for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Prop up the sore foot on a pillow when you ice it or anytime you sit or lie down during the next 3 days. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.
- Your doctor may recommend that you wrap your foot with an elastic bandage. Keep your foot wrapped for as long as your doctor advises.
- If your doctor recommends crutches, use them as directed.
- Wear roomy footwear.
- As soon as pain and swelling end, begin gentle exercises of your foot. Your doctor can tell you which exercises will help.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Your foot turns pale, white, blue, or cold.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You cannot move or stand on your foot.
- Your foot looks twisted or out of its normal position.
- Your foot is not stable when you step down.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.

- Red streaks leading from the sore area.
- Pus draining from a place on your foot.
- A fever.
- Your foot is numb or tingly.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.
- You have bruises from an injury that last longer than 2 weeks.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.healthwise.net/ed>

Enter **D999** in the search box to learn more about "**Foot Pain: Care Instructions**".

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