

Sprains are injuries to the ligaments that connect bones. A sprain occurs when a ligament is stretched excessively or torn. Sprains are less common in young children, because their ligaments are usually stronger than the growing bones and cartilage to which they are attached. Therefore, the growing part of the bone might separate or tear away before the ligament is injured.

In young children, the ankle is the most commonly sprained joint, followed by the knee and wrist. The signs and symptoms of sprains in young children can be quite similar to those for fracture and include the following:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Inability to walk, bear weight, or use the joint

Treatment - Sprains can, generally, be treated at home. Basic first aid for sprains consists of RICE:

- **R**est
- **I**ce for 48 hrs
- **C**ompression of the injury by wrapping it in an elastic ACE bandage
- **E**levation of the sprain above the level of the heart

Over the counter pain medications such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen can be taken to reduce swelling and pain. After 48 hrs warm compresses can be applied for comfort. Most sprains will heal within two weeks without subsequent complications.

When to call our office:

Call if a joint injury fails to heal or swelling recurs. Ignoring these signs could result in more severe damage to the joint. Call if your child has a joint injury and is unable to bear weight or has excessive swelling or pain. Your doctor will examine the child and, in some instances, obtain special x-rays to rule out a fracture or a break. If there is a fracture or break your child will be referred to an Orthopedist.