

## Ankle sprain



 Office d'éducation des patients du CUSM  
MUHC Patient Education Office



This material is also available on the  
MUHC Health Education Collection (<http://infotheque.muhc.ca/>)  
MUHC Patient Education Office ([www.muhcpatienteducation.ca](http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)).

This material was developed by the McGill  
University Health Centre Emergency Department.

### What is wrong?

You have injured ligaments in your ankle but no bone is broken. It may be very painful, tender, swollen and bruised.

In many cases, X-Rays are not necessary to make the diagnosis.

### What should I do at home?

- ▶ Apply ice 3 to 5 times a day for 15 minutes until the swelling goes down. Use a towel to wrap the ice instead of putting it directly on your skin.
- ▶ If your ankle is swollen, keep it elevated. At night, put some pillows underneath your foot. During the day, keep it on a chair when you are sitting.
- ▶ The emergency doctor might have given you medication for pain. Take it as directed.
- ▶ If you were given crutches, use them as instructed. You can gradually put weight on the ankle as the pain improves.

### When am I going to feel better?

In the first few days after the ankle injury, your ankle may be quite swollen, painful and bruised. Ankle sprains usually improve within 3 weeks but in certain cases it can take longer.

### Should I see another doctor?

- ▶ You should contact your family doctor to let him or her know of your situation.
- ▶ In certain cases the emergency doctor may refer you to a specialist.
- ▶ Physiotherapy may be helpful.

### When should I come back to the Emergency Department?

You should return right away if:

- ▶ The pain, crookedness or instability of the ankle gets worse over time
- ▶ Your foot feels numb or you don't feel your toes properly

### Notes