

# First aid fact sheet Sprain and strain



It can be difficult to tell whether an injury is a fracture, dislocation, sprain or strain. If in doubt, always treat as a fracture.

## Signs and symptoms

#### Sprain

- intense pain
- restricted movement of the injured joint
- rapid development of swelling and bruising

#### Strain

- sharp, sudden pain in the region of the injury
- usually loss of power
- muscle tenderness

### What to do

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Follow RICE:
  - Rest rest the patient and the injured part
  - Ice apply an ice pack or cold pack for 15 minutes every 2 hours for 24 hours, then for 15 minutes every 4 hours for 24 hours
  - Compression apply a compression bandage firmly to extend well beyond the injury
  - Elevation elevate the injured part.
- 3 Avoid HARM:
  - Heat
  - Alcohol
  - Running or other exercise of the injured area
  - Massage.
- 4 Seek medical aid.

#### In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

**DRSABCD** Danger 
Response 
Send for help Airway 
Breathing 
CPR 
Defibrillation

#### Find out more • www.stjohnnsw.com.au • 1300 ST JOHN

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