

## **PATIENT INFORMATION – KNEE INJURY**

You may have sprained your ligaments or strained the muscle or tendon in your knee which can cause pain and swelling and may cause you to walk with a limp.

### **TREATMENT**

Most mild to moderate strains can be treated at home using self-help. Painkillers\* can also be used to ease pain.

### **Self help tips to:**

#### **PRICE therapy**

- **Protection** - protect the injured area from further injury
- **Rest** –rest the injured area. Avoid activities that cause pain.
- **Ice** – put ice on the area at once. Put a cold compress on it at once and then for 20 minutes every 2-3 hours for the first 72 hours after your injury. Do not allow ice to touch your skin directly. A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel makes a good ice pack. The bag of peas can be re-frozen again and again, but **DO NOT EAT** the contents.
- **Compression** – compress the injured site lightly using a bandage. Do not wrap it too tightly. Loosen the bandage if the pain increases or if the limb becomes numb.
- **Elevation** - keep the injured area raised above the level of the heart, to help reduce swelling especially when sitting or lying down. You could place the injury on a pillow to raise it if that is appropriate.

#### **Avoiding HARM**

For the first 72 hours you should avoid HARM. This means you should avoid:

- **Heat** - such as hot baths, saunas, or heat packs (applying a controlled amount of heat to affected joints)
- **Alcohol** - this will increase bleeding and swelling, and decreases healing

- **Running** - or any other exercise that could cause more damage, and
- **Massage** - which may increase bleeding and swelling.

Relieve any pain by taking over the counter painkillers, such as  
\*paracetamol

### **Recovery time**

Following a sprain, or a strain, the length of time that it will take for you to recover will depend on how severe the injury is.

After a knee sprain, depending on how severe your injury is, you will probably be able to walk one or two weeks after the injury. You may be able to use your knee fully after 6-8 weeks and you will probably be able to return to sporting activities after 8-12 weeks.

### **Please remember**

- If your knee does not appear to be getting better make an appointment with your doctor.
- Return any crutches/sticks to the Accident & Emergency Department when you are able to walk without them as these can be used by other people who need them.

### **Further Advice/Instructions**

Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.

### **\*Pain relief advice**

You may have been given some pain relief by the health professionals in the Accident and Emergency Department. If this runs out and you need further pain relief, you can speak to a pharmacist for advice. Some common painkillers are available to buy over the counter, for e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen. Always follow the instructions on the packet if

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you are taking these, and seek further advice from the pharmacist should you have any concerns, particularly if it is for a child.



If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the Choose Well website at [www.choosewellwales.org.uk](http://www.choosewellwales.org.uk)

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact [ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk)

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)