

Getting to Know Your Feet Injuries

Foot and ankle injuries can occur quickly. Some can be medical emergencies. Getting quick attention to the injured area can prevent complications. Learning some basics about injuries will help keep your feet and ankles safe and in good working order.

Before visiting your health care provider there are simple steps you can take to ease pain and assist with healing. These include:

- Rest and restrict activity. Do not walk around on the injured foot or ankle.
- Apply ice to the injured area. Never apply ice directly to the injured area; wrap it in a towel first to prevent frostbite. Apply the ice 20 minutes on the injured area and 40 minutes off.
- Lightly wrap the injured area in a compression type bandage. Do not wrap tightly because this can restrict blood flow and increase swelling to the area.
- Elevate the injured area above heart level. This will help decrease swelling which can increase pain.
- If you have a cut, wash gently and apply pressure to the area with a clean, sterile bandage. Seek medical attention if the cut is deep or bleeding profusely.
- If you have a blister, do not open it. Apply a bandage to the area.
- If you have foreign material in a cut, such as a splinter or piece of glass, do not attempt home removal unless you can see the object. Diabetics should always seek immediate medical attention.

Prevention of injury is the key concept. Following simple rules will help keep your feet and ankles safe from unnecessary injury.

- Wear good fitting shoes.
- Wear the proper shoes for the activity.
- Do not go barefoot.
- Avoid or walk carefully on slippery surfaces such as wet floors or ice.
- Make sure walkways are well lit. If you get up at night make sure you have a clear pathway and you can see where you are walking.

Adapted for use in Kentucky from American Podiatry Medical Association (2007). Foot and ankle injuries. Available online at http://www.apma.org/s_apma/doc.asp?CID=371&DID=9412.

This is a publication in an eight-part series on **Getting to Know Your Feet**. Other publications in this series are:

- Overview: HSW-PAR.820
- Common Foot Ailments: HSW-PAR.821
- Aging Feet: HSW-PAR.822
- Arthritis: HSW-PAR.823
- Diabetes: HSW-PAR.824
- Information for Women: HSW-PAR.826
- Walking for Health: HSW-PAR.827

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