

# Sprains and strains



**In a medical emergency,  
call Triple Zero (000) for  
an ambulance.**

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

## Signs & symptoms

### Sprain

- intense pain
- restricted mobility
- rapid development of swelling and bruising.

### Strain

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

## What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Follow the RICE management plan:
  - REST the patient and the injured part.
  - Apply ICEPACK (cold compress) wrapped in a wet cloth to the injury for 15 minutes every 2 hours for 24 hours, then for 15 minutes every 4 hours for 24 hours.
  - Apply COMPRESSION elastic bandage firmly to extend well beyond the injury.
  - ELEVATE the injured part.
3. Seek medical attention if no improvement.