

Ankle sprains

A parent's guide to signs, symptoms, treatment, and prevention.



A sprain is an injury to the ligaments around a joint. Ligaments are strong, flexible fibers that hold bones together. When a ligament is stretched too far or tears, the joint will become painful and swell.

Causes

Sprains are caused when a joint is forced to move into an unnatural position. For example, “twisting” one’s ankle causes a sprain to the ligaments around the ankle.

Symptoms

- Joint pain or muscle pain
- Swelling
- Joint stiffness
- Discoloration of the skin, especially bruising

First aid

1. Apply ice immediately to help reduce swelling. Wrap the ice in cloth – **DO NOT** place ice directly on the skin.
2. Try **NOT** to move the affected area. To help you do this, bandage the affected area firmly, but not too tightly. ACE bandages work well. Use a splint if necessary.
3. Keep the swollen joint elevated above the level of the heart, even while sleeping.
4. Rest the affected joint for several days.

Aspirin, Ibuprofen, or other pain relievers can help. **DO NOT** give aspirin to children. Keep pressure off the injured area until the pain subsides (usually seven to 10 days for mild sprains and three to five weeks for severe sprains). You may require crutches when walking. Rehabilitation to regain the motion and strength of the joint should begin within one week.

When to contact a medical professional Call 911 if:

- The suspected broken bone is in the head, neck, back, hip, pelvis, or upper leg.
- You cannot completely immobilize the injury at the scene by yourself.
- There is severe bleeding.
- An area below the injured joint is pale, cold, clammy, or blue.
- There is a bone projecting through the skin.

Other broken bones may not be medical emergencies, but they still deserve medical attention. Contact your health care provider.



● **SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital**
1465 South Grand Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63104



● **SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Pediatrics Specialty Services SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital**
400 Medical Plaza, Ste. 220
Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367



● **SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Pediatrics Specialty Services South County**
13000 Butler Crest Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63128



● **SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Pediatrics Specialty Services North County**
3878 Pershall Road
Ferguson, MO 63135



● **SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Pediatrics Specialty Services Anderson Ambulatory Surgery Center**
3403 Anderson HealthCare Dr.
Edwardsville, IL 62025

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes.

Specialists your child has access to include adolescent medicine physicians, cardiologists, emergency medicine physicians, neurologists, nutritionists, orthopedists, pediatric psychologists, physical therapists, pulmonologists, radiologists, and rehabilitation specialists. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and supports for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call or text us **24/7 at 314-577-5640**.

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital providers, **24 hours a day in the ER at:** SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, DePaul Hospital, St. Clare Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital-St. Charles, St. Joseph Hospital-Lake St. Louis, Anderson Hospital, and HSHS St. Elizabeth Hospital.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, SSM Health ministries implemented enhanced safety measures, which are evaluated periodically based on COVID-19 transmission numbers. To ensure your protection and that of others, we continue to require face masks upon entry along with ministry-specific screening processes.