



## **Common Sense in Medicine**

**This information is based on patient interaction of over twenty-five years in the office of Dr. David Hubler M.D. Orthopedic Surgeon**

### **The Sprained Ankle**

One of the most common injuries I have treated over the last 25 years of specializing in sports injuries is the sprained ankle. The ligaments on each side of the ankle allow you to move up and down, but keep you from turning the ankle side-ways. If you step in a hole or on top of another player's foot, the ankle rolls sideways. The ligaments get tight trying to stop the motion.

If there is too much momentum, then the ankle rolls until the ankle bones break or the ligaments tear. Bleeding and swelling start.

Common sense says the first 10 minutes after an ankle injury are the most important to elevate the foot, and apply ice and compression to stop the bleeding. After the first 10 minutes, elevation is still very important. Supporting the ankle relieves the pain.

Because of the shape of the ankle, even with a severe ankle sprain you can still walk on it cautiously. But, it is best not to try to walk on it until you are sure it is not broken. The only way to tell for sure is with an x-ray. However, if the

tenderness is only below the ankle bone on the outside of the foot and not over the bony knob itself, it is probably an ankle sprain not a break.

It is very important to prevent reinjury for at least 6 weeks to keep from ending up with a weak ankle. Most ankle braces don't give any support. Of the cheaper braces, the canvas versions with metal supports are the best. We do now have a brace that is sized to the patient and gives unbelievable support. It can be worn inside of most shoes and allows almost any activity without worry of reinjury.

We also have exercises to strengthen the ankle muscles. Wearing proper shoes and taping the ankles can minimize ankle sprains..

Arthroscopic surgery is sometimes necessary to correct problems that cause chronic or recurrent pain following multiple ankle sprains.

**By David Hubler MD**

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