



Acute Injury Treatment

The immediate care of any sprain, strain, or contusion (bruise) is the same. Please adhere to the following guidelines and apply “**RICES**” to help prevent further injury or discomfort.

- R = Rest** - allow the injured area to begin the healing process. This may take one to 10 days, depending on the severity of the injury.
- I = Ice** - after the initial evaluation, apply ice* for 20 minutes. During the next 72 hours (minimum), apply ice or soak the injured body part in ice water for 20 minutes, no more than five (5) times per day. Apply no heat to the injury during the first 72 hours after the injury has occurred.
- C = Compression** - apply a “snug” elastic wrap around the injured body part, being careful not to cut off circulation. It is suggested that elastic wraps be removed while the athlete is sleeping, reapplied often if swelling is present, and elevate the injured body part above the heart when possible.
- E = Elevation** - keep the body part above the level of the heart whenever possible. For example, with an ankle sprain, raise the foot end of the bed 8-12 inches by placing an object between the mattress and the box spring, under the foot area.
- S = Support** - support the injured body part if possible.

*Ice from a home freezer should be placed in a plastic bag or wrapped in a wet towel. Place the ice on the injured body part with one or two layers of wet towel between the ice and the skin. When using chemical ice packs, it is suggested that they be placed in a plastic bag and one or two layers of wet towel between the ice and skin. Extra precaution should be taken when placing chemical ice near the eyes or wounds.

Note: heat application of *any* kind is not advisable for a recent (acute) injury.

These first aid guidelines are suggested for immediate short-term care, they are not to take the place of proper medical care and attention. Please refer to a certified athletic trainer or physician immediately, when appropriate.

All injuries must be reported to the school athletic training staff immediately. Injuries that cause any time loss from sports participation must be re-evaluated by the school athletic training staff prior to returning to activity.