

My Ankle Hurts After a Sprain

Understanding Ankle & Foot Sprains

What Is Causing Ankle & Foot Sprain Pain?

An ankle sprain happens when the ligaments that hold the ankle bones together are stretched or torn, most often when the foot rolls or twists beyond its normal range. It's one of the most common musculoskeletal injuries, affecting people of all activity levels — from athletes to someone simply stepping off a curb wrong.

What Does It Feel Like?

- Pain and swelling around the ankle, often on the outside
- Bruising that may spread into the foot over a day or two
- Difficulty or pain bearing weight, depending on severity
- A feeling of the ankle being unstable or “giving way”
- Stiffness that lingers after the initial swelling goes down

What Causes It?

- Rolling the ankle inward or outward on uneven ground
- Landing awkwardly from a jump or changing direction quickly in sport
- A prior ankle sprain — the single biggest risk factor for another one
- Weak or slow-reacting ankle muscles
- Poor balance or joint position sense (proprioception)
- Unsupportive or worn-out footwear

What Makes It Worse?

- Walking on uneven or unstable surfaces
- Going up or down stairs before it's healed
- Returning to sport or activity too soon
- Prolonged standing without support
- Skipping the rehab needed to restore strength and balance

When Should I Be Concerned?

- Inability to take four steps immediately after the injury
- Point tenderness directly over the bone, not just the ligament
- Obvious deformity or a visibly “out of place” joint
- Numbness, tingling, or a cold/pale foot

The Good News

Ankle sprains respond extremely well to physical therapy. Early guided movement, followed by balance and proprioception training and progressive strengthening, is the most effective way to heal fully and prevent the sprain from becoming a chronic, unstable ankle.

Most patients recover from a mild sprain in **1 to 2 weeks**, while moderate to severe sprains typically take 4 to 12 weeks of targeted physical therapy.

This information is for general educational purposes only and is not a substitute for a professional evaluation. Call us today — we have immediate openings with no waitlist.

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