



## Knee sprain

### What is a knee sprain?

A sprain is a partial or complete tearing of ligaments. Ligaments are tough fibers holding bones together at joints, and when stretched or damaged, a sprain occurs.

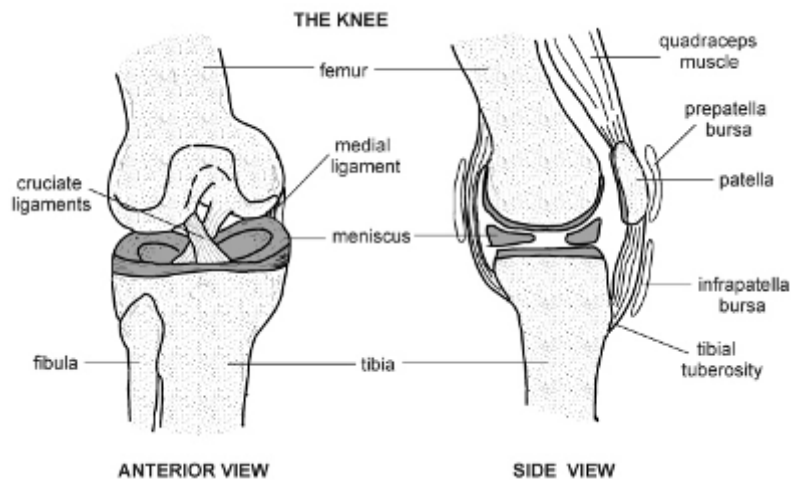
### How long will it take to heal?

It often takes the same length of time as a broken bone to heal (around 6-8 weeks) and the time to full recovery of function can be similar.

### What should I do to help healing?

- Rest the injured knee for 24 hours. Lie down and keep the injured knee raised up on two pillows
- Apply ice for 15 minutes every 2-3 hours by placing ice or frozen vegetables in a plastic bag with a towel between the bag and your skin.
- Do not apply heat for 48 hours after injury as this will lead to more swelling and pain.
- Use heat (a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel) after 48 hours to give pain relief and aid healing.
- Use splints / bandages as instructed.
- Use standard over-the-counter pain killers such as paracetamol, codeine and ibuprofen to control any pain. Check with your GP if you are not sure about taking painkillers.
- When can I start walking?

It is important to keep your leg moving. In the first 24-48 hours, you should start bending and straightening the knee without putting weight on it. If the swelling and pain improves over 48 hours then you can start to partially weight bear, gradually building up to walking slowly without any aids by day 5.



## What to look out for

- If a compression bandage or cast was applied, watch your toes and feet for swelling, blue discolouration, numbness or excessive pain. If these occur with a bandage, remove and apply more loosely. If they occur with a cast then return to the Emergency Department for the application of a less tightly fitting cast.
- In the initial stages, the degree of swelling can make it difficult to accurately assess your knee. If you are unable to walk at day 5 without support, or feel that your knee is getting worse or there is very little improvement, go to your GP who can reassess your knee to rule out serious underlying injury.

## Further information

More information is available Clinical Knowledge Summaries:

<http://cks.nice.org.uk/sprains-and-strains>

## Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

## Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – How likely are you to recommend our A&E Department to family and friends if they needed similar care or treatment?

This can be completed online at <http://surveys.this.nhs.uk> using tag name **chftae** or by completing the form available within the department.