

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

PATIENT INFORMATION KNEE INJURY ADVICE

This leaflet gives you advice and exercises to help you recover following your knee injury. You may have sprained or strained the muscle, ligaments, tendons, or damaged the knee cartilage or dislocated the knee cap. With knee injuries there is often a lot of pain and swelling and may cause you to walk with a limp.

REST - It's important to rest your injured knee to prevent further injury and allow healing to occur. Over the first week reduce the amount of walking you do and keep the ankle / foot gently exercised to avoid a stiffening of the joint / limb. Avoid strenuous activity exercise until you can walk without it causing any pain.

ICE - An ice pack can be applied to the affected area. To do this wrap an ice pack in a towel and apply to the affected limb for 5-10 minutes every 2 hours as often as possible over the first 48 hours of your injury. This limits the swelling and can help reduce the amount of pain.

PAINKILLERS - You should take painkillers that are available over the counter without a prescription such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Ibuprofen is an anti-inflammatory that helps after the first 48 hours. You should follow the manufacturer's instructions on the correct dose and if there are reasons why you shouldn't take them.

ELEVATION - Elevate your knee on a footstool or some pillows so that the knee is above the level of your hip. This helps to decrease the swellings and pain. Try to do this as often as possible.

WALKING

After a sprain of the knee it's important to use your knee as normally as possible. It will feel painful and stiff to start but it is important to continue to regularly move the knee and this will aid your recovery.

If necessary you may be given a knee splint / brace and you will be instructed on how to use this.

In the early stages of an injury standing on the injured knee for prolonged periods may cause the knee to become swollen and painful. You may be given crutches for a short time to help. However walking should not damage your knee any further and try to get back to walking normally on the knee as soon as possible.

In the event you are given crutches please remember to return your crutches to the Therapy Services (E127) or Fracture Clinic (A111) when you have finished with them.

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EXERCISES

It's important to start to exercise your knee as soon as possible unless advised otherwise. The exercises will prevent pain and stiffness in the knee joint. It can also prevent quadriceps muscle the large muscle at the front of the thigh from wasting rapidly which can happen in knee injuries. These exercises are most effective if done regularly and we recommend 4 times a day.

STATIC QUADS -Lying on the floor or bed with the leg straightened. Push the back of the knee down into the floor Keep your toes pulled up towards your head. You should feel your thigh muscle tighten. Hold for 10 seconds then release, **Repeat 6 times.**

STRAIGHT LEG RAISE - Lying on the floor or bed with the leg straightened. Lift the leg off the bed. Hold the leg 6 inches off the bed for 10 seconds and release. **Repeat 6 times.**

KNEE FLEXION - Lying on the floor or bed with the leg straightened practise bending and straightening your knee as far as comfortable **Repeat 6 times.**

A follow up may be arranged. If, however, a follow up is not planned and there has been no improvement in pain, or in your ability to walk after 2 weeks then please make an appointment to see your GP.

Contacts / Further Information

If you have a general concern and need further advice please contact your GP or NHS 111 by dialling 111 from your phone.

If you would like further information, regarding the evidence printed in this leaflet please contact Emergency Department on 01245 514007 or refer to:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/knee-pain/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cartilage-damage/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sprains-and-strains/>

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print, easy read accessible information, audio/visual, signing, pictorial and change picture bank forma via the Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS) on 01245 514235.



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Document History

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