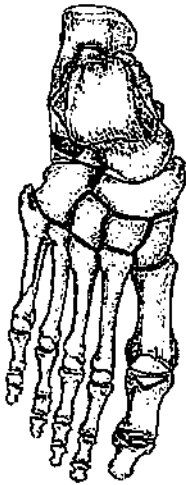


Toe Sprain

You have a sprain which is a stretching or tearing of the ligaments that hold a joint together. There are no broken bones. Sprains take from 3–6 weeks to heal. A toe sprain may be treated by taping the injured toe to the next toe ("buddy taping"). This protects the injured toe and holds it in position. A minor sprain may not require any additional support.



If the toenail has been severely injured, it may fall off in 1–2 weeks. A new one will usually start to grow back within a month.

Home care

The following guidelines will help you care for your injury at home:

- Keep your leg elevated when sitting or lying down. This is very important during the first 48 hours to reduce swelling. Stay off the injured foot as much as possible until you can walk on it without pain. If needed, you may use crutches during the first week for this purpose. (Crutches can be rented at many pharmacies or surgical/orthopedic supply stores).
- You may be given a cast shoe to wear to prevent movement in your toe. If not, you can use a sandal or any shoe that does not put pressure on the injured toe until the swelling and pain go away. If using a sandal, be careful not to strike your foot against anything, since another injury could make the sprain worse.
- Apply an ice pack (ice cubes in a plastic bag, wrapped in a towel) over the injured area for 20 minutes every 1–2 hours the first day. You should continue with ice packs 3–4 times a day for the next two days. Continue the use of ice packs for relief of pain and swelling as needed.
- If buddy tape was applied and it becomes wet or dirty, change it. You may replace it with paper, plastic or cloth tape. Cloth tape and paper tapes must be kept dry. Keep the buddy tape in place for at least four weeks.
- You may use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to control pain, unless another pain medicine was prescribed. If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.]
- You may return to sports after healing, when you can run without pain.

Follow-up care

Follow up with your doctor or this facility as advised.

Any X-rays you had today don't show any broken bones, breaks, or fractures. Sometimes fractures don't show up on the first X-ray. Bruises and sprains can sometimes hurt as much as a fracture. These injuries can take time to heal completely. If your symptoms don't improve or they get worse, talk with your doctor. You may need a repeat X-ray.

When to seek medical advice

Call your health care provider right away if any of these occur:

- Redness, warmth, or fluid drainage from your toe
- Pain or swelling increases
- Toes become cold, blue, numb, or tingly

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Treatment for Turf Toe

Turf toe is a sprain of the largest joint of the big toe. It happens when the toe bends up too far. This can happen when pushing off the foot to run.

Turf toe became more common when football players began playing on artificial turf instead of grass. Artificial turf is harder than grass. It's a common injury for athletes who play football or other sports on artificial turf. But it can happen in a wide variety of sports and activities.

Types of treatment

Treatment depends on how severe the injury is. A mild injury can be treated with:

- Resting from the activity that caused the injury
- Using cold packs for 20 minutes at a time, several times a day
- Using an elastic compression band to help prevent more swelling
- Raising your leg when sitting to avoid swelling
- Taking over-the-counter pain medicine

A more severe injury may be treated with:

- **A walking boot or hard shoe.** This is used to help keep the toe joint from moving or bending. It's worn for a week or so for a moderate injury. It's worn for a longer time with a more severe injury.
- **A cast.** This helps to keep the foot from moving or bending. It's usually worn for at least several weeks.
- **Surgery.** You may need surgery if you have a severe tear of tissues in the joint, the joint is unstable, or the injury doesn't heal well.
- **Physical therapy.** These are exercises that can help stretch and strengthen your big toe as it heals.

Possible complications of turf toe

Turf toe may cause long-term stiffness and pain in your joint. Physical therapy exercises may help prevent stiffness and pain.

Getting back to your sport

If you are an athlete, talk with your healthcare provider and trainers to see when you might be ready to return to your sport. It's important not to return to your activity too soon, because this increases your chances of injuring your toe again. People with mild injuries may be able to play soon after the injury. If you have a more severe injury, you may need to be out of play from weeks to months. Full recovery may take up to a year.

Your healthcare provider or trainer can suggest appropriate shoes and shoe inserts. These will help to give your foot more support. You may also be told to tape your big toe to your other toes. This can give extra support.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- Symptoms that don't get better or get worse
- High fever
- Numbness in the toe
- Toe that feels cold
- Toe that looks pale

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