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| **First Aid: Strains and Sprains**Strains are injuries to muscle due to overstretching, while sprains involve a stretch or a partial tear of ligaments (which connect two bones) or tendons (which connect muscle to bone). Sprains and strains happen more often in teens than in younger children.**Signs and Symptoms*** pain in the joint or muscle
* swelling and bruising
* warmth and redness of the injured area
* difficulty moving the injured part

**What to Do*** Make sure your child stops activity right away.
* Think **R.I.C.E.** for the first 48 hours after the injury:
	+ ***R***est: Rest the injured part until it's less painful.
	+ ***I***ce: Wrap an icepack or cold compress in a towel and place over the injured part immediately. Continue for no more than 20 minutes at a time, four to eight times a day.
	+ ***C***ompression: Support the injured part with an elastic compression bandage for at least 2 days.
	+ ***E***levation: Raise the injured part above heart level to decrease swelling.
* Give your child ibuprofen or acetaminophen for pain and to reduce swelling.

**Seek Emergency Medical Care****If Your Child Has:*** severe pain when the injured part is touched or moved
* continued trouble bearing weight
* increased bruising
* numbness or a feeling of "pins and needles" in the injured area
* a limb that looks "bent" or misshapen
* signs of infection (increased warmth, redness, streaks, swelling, and pain)
* a strain or sprain that doesn't seem to be improving after 5 to 7 days

**Think Prevention!**Teach kids to warm up properly and to stretch before and after exercising or participating in any sport, and make sure they **always wear appropriate protective equipment**.Reviewed by: Steven Dowshen, MDDate reviewed: April 2014 |
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