

Hand Injury - Minor

Definition

- Your child has a minor injury to the hand.
- They can use the hand, but with some pain.

Health Information

Types of Hand Injuries

- **Sprain.** Stretched or torn ligaments.
- **Strain.** Stretched or torn muscle (a "pulled muscle").
- **Muscle bruise.** From a direct impact.
- **Bone bruise.** From a direct impact.
- **Broken bones (fractures) and bones out of joint (dislocations).** These injuries are more serious and need to be seen by a doctor. They are not covered in this handout.

Symptoms

- Pain is the main symptom.
- Moving the hand worsens the pain.
- Swelling is also common for several days.

Causes

- Falling onto the hand often causes hand injuries.
- Repeated movements can cause sprains or strains. Examples are playing video games or typing a lot.
- Being struck while playing sports can also cause hand injuries.

Care Advice

1. Key Points

- Bruised bones or muscles can be treated at home.
- Most sprains and strains can also be treated at home.
- Here is some home care advice that should help.

2. Cold for Pain During First 48 Hours

- To reduce initial pain and swelling, use a cold pack. You can also use ice in a plastic bag or wrapped in a wet cloth.
- Put ice on the hand for 20 minutes. Repeat every hour for the first 4 hours. Then use it only as needed for the first 2 days.
- Caution: avoid frostbite.

3. Heat for Pain After 48 Hours

- If pain lasts more than 2 days, put heat on the sore area.
- Use a heat pack, heating pad or warm wet washcloth.
- Do this for 10 minutes, as needed. Reason: increases blood flow and speeds healing.
- Caution: avoid burns.

4. **Pain Medicine**

- For pain relief, give acetaminophen every 4 hours or ibuprofen every 6 hours as needed (See Dosage table).
- Ibuprofen may be more effective for this type of pain.

5. **Activity and Movement During Recovery**

- Try to rest the hand for the first 48 hours.
- After the first 48 hours, start moving the hand more. Reason: this helps prevent tight muscles and joints.
- Make a fist and release it. Wiggle the fingers. Squeeze a small squishy ball.
- As pain improves, slowly increase activity. Allow any activity that does not cause pain.
- Take a break from repetitive activities like typing or gaming if they caused the injury. Return to them gradually as pain allows.
- Here's a good rule: if it HURTS, don't do it.

6. **What to Expect**

- Pain most often peaks 2 or 3 days after injury.
- Swelling can last up to a week.
- Pain may take 2 weeks to go away completely.
- Protect the area from further injury until healed.

Call Your Doctor If

- Your child cannot move the hand
- Pain doesn't improve after 3 days
- Pain lasts more than 2 weeks
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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