



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

## **Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# **Sports Medicine: Deltoid Ligament Sprain**

The deltoid ligament is a triangle-shaped ligament on the inner (medial) ankle which is stronger and more compact than the outer ligaments. Deltoid injuries are very rare and most happen with eversion (rolling ankle out) or along with a high ankle (syndesmosis) sprain. Sprains are classified into three grades: Grade I – the ligament is stretched but not torn; Grade II - the ligament is partially torn; and Grade III – the ligament is completely torn.

### **Signs and symptoms**

- pain, tenderness and swelling on the inside of the ankle
- bruising that may spread to the heel
- pop or tearing feeling at the time of injury
- unable or difficult to walk soon after injury

### **Increased risk**

- previous ankle sprain(s)
- activities where foot may have an awkward landing (basketball, volleyball, soccer)
- shoes with not enough support to help prevent sideways motion
- poor physical conditioning (strength, flexibility and balance)

### **Treatment**

- Medicine
  - Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) may be recommended. Take these as directed by your health care provider.
  - Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), may be used.
- Use of cold and heat

- Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
- Heat should not be used on a new injury but may be used before doing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your health care provider or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or a warm soak. Apply for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Orthopedic aids
  - An elastic bandage may be used to relieve pain and reduce swelling.
  - A walking boot may be recommended to provide support to the joint.
  - Crutches may be used in the beginning for more severe injuries.
- Rehab and surgery
  - Rehab is important to regain motion, strength, and balance in the ankle, and to reduce the risk of another injury.

## How to prevent

- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Tape, brace or wear supportive shoes to help prevent injury.
- Maintain good conditioning, muscle strength, ankle and leg flexibility, endurance and balance training activity.

## When to call the health care provider

Call your health care provider or the **Sports Medicine team** at **614-355-6000** if:

- symptoms get worse or do not improve despite treatment
- pain, numbness, discoloring or coldness in the foot or toes
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

**To schedule an appointment  
with Sports Medicine, visit  
[NationwideChildrens.org/Sports  
MedicineScheduling](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/sports-medicine) or scan this  
code with your camera phone.**

