



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

## **Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# **Sports Medicine: Hip Strain or Sprain**

The hip joint is the anchor for many muscles in the body, such as those in the abdomen, buttocks, and legs. There are several hip muscles that allow the hip to bend (flex), straighten (extend), and turn. The hip ligaments help secure the hip joint. A strain is an injury to muscles and tendons. A sprain is an injury to the ligaments. A hip strain or sprain occurs when a muscle/tendon (strain) or ligament (sprain) that supports the hip is stretched or torn past its limit.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

- Pain that increases with movement of the hip felt in the hip, groin, buttocks, or thigh
- Swelling around the hip
- Muscle spasm in the hip or thigh
- Loss of strength in the hip muscles
- Decreased motion in the hip joint

## **Increased Risk**

- Sports that require repeated kicking, jumping, cycling, or running (soccer, football)
- Poor warm-up before practice or competition
- Poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility), coordination, or endurance
- Previous leg injury

## **Treatment**

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

- 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 and raise the foot and ankle at or above heart level to reduce swelling.
  - Heat may be used before doing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your doctor, health care provider, or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or a warm soak. Apply for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Orthopedic aids
  - Crutches may be used at first to help with limping and pain.
- Exercises
  - Exercises to improve strength and flexibility of the hip and core are helpful. These can be done at home, but often a referral to a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be advised by your doctor or health care provider.

## **How to Prevent**

- Do proper warm up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Use proper sports technique and wear protective equipment.
- Maintain proper conditioning, hip and thigh flexibility, muscle strength and endurance, and cardiovascular fitness.

## **When to Call the Doctor**

Call your doctor, health care provider, or the Sports Medicine team at (614) 355-6000 if:

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in 2 weeks, even with treatment.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop.

**To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling](https://NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling) or scan this code with your camera phone.**

