



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

## **Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# **Sports Medicine: Anterior Ankle Impingement**

Anterior ankle impingement is pain and pinching of bone, soft tissue or scar tissue at the front of the ankle. This can happen after a new or old injury. The swollen tissue or scar tissue gets caught between the bones of the lower part of the leg (tibia) and the upper part of the foot (talus). A bony spur at the front of the lower part of these bones may also pinch normal tissue causing swelling.

### **Signs and symptoms**

- pain bringing the front of the foot up
- pain with climbing stairs, running or walking up hills, deep squatting
- loss of ability to plant or push off
- not able to run, cut or jump at full speed
- swelling and locking

### **Increased risk**

- activities that require repeated, forceful flexing of the ankle (sprinting, jumping, blocking in football)
- repeated injuries to the foot or ankle
- poor warm-up before practice or play
- poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility)

### **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 or a topical cream.

- 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 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
  - A brace or walking boot may be recommended to provide support and decrease pain.
- Rehab
  - Rehab may be prescribed to improve motion, strength, and balance. Your health care provider may refer you to a physical therapist or athletic trainer for more treatment.
- Injection
  - A steroid injection may be done to decrease pain and inflammation
- Surgery
  - If pain does not improve with the above measures, surgery may be needed to correct the impingement

## How to prevent

- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Use protective taping or braces to prevent ankle injury.
- Maintain suitable conditioning, ankle and leg flexibility, muscle strength, endurance and cardiovascular fitness.
- Allow for a full recovery before returning to play.

## 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 in 2 weeks despite treatment
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

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

