

Knee Problems and Injuries - Home Treatment

Home treatment may help relieve pain, swelling, and stiffness.

CONTINUE READING BELOW

- Rest and protect an injured or sore area. Stop, change, or take a break from any activity that may be causing your pain or soreness. When resting, place a small pillow under your knee.
- Ice will reduce pain and swelling. Apply ice or cold packs immediately to prevent or minimize swelling. Apply the ice or cold pack for 10 to 20 minutes, 3 or more times a day.
 - For the first 48 hours after an injury, avoid things that might increase swelling, such as hot showers, hot tubs, hot packs, or alcoholic beverages.
 - After 48 to 72 hours, if swelling is gone, apply heat and begin gentle exercise with the aid of moist heat to help restore and maintain flexibility. Some experts recommend alternating between heat and cold treatments.
- Compression, or wrapping the injured or sore area with an elastic bandage (such as an Ace wrap), will help decrease swelling.
 - Don't wrap it too tightly, since this can cause more swelling below the affected area. Loosen the bandage if it gets too tight. Signs that the bandage is too tight include numbness, tingling, increased pain, coolness, or swelling in the area below the bandage.
 - Don't expect the bandage to protect or stabilize a knee injury.
 - Talk to your doctor if you think you need to use a wrap for longer than 48 to 72 hours. A more serious problem may be present.
- Elevate the injured or sore area on pillows while applying ice and anytime you are sitting or lying down. Try to keep the area at or above the level of your heart to help minimize swelling.
- Reduce stress on your sore knee (until you can get advice from your doctor):
 - Use a cane or crutch in the hand opposite your painful knee.
 - Use two crutches, keeping weight off the leg with the sore knee. You can get canes or crutches from most pharmacies. Crutches are recommended if a cane causes you to walk with a limp.
- Gently massage or rub the area to relieve pain and encourage blood flow. Do not massage the injured area if it causes pain.
- Try the following exercises to maintain flexibility:



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- Avoid high-impact exercise, such as running, skiing, snowboarding, or playing tennis, until your knee is no longer painful or swollen.

Do not smoke. Smoking slows healing because it decreases blood supply and delays tissue repair. For more information, see the topic Quitting Smoking.

Medicine you can buy without a prescription

Try a nonprescription medicine to help treat your fever or pain:

- Acetaminophen, such as Tylenol
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):
 - Ibuprofen, such as Advil or Motrin
 - Naproxen, such as Aleve or Naprosyn
- Aspirin (also a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug), such as Bayer or Bufferin

Talk to your child's doctor before switching back and forth between doses of acetaminophen and ibuprofen. When you switch between two medicines, there is a chance your child will get too much medicine.

Safety tips

Be sure to follow these safety tips when you use a nonprescription medicine:

- Carefully read and follow all directions on the medicine bottle and box.
 - Do not take more than the recommended dose.
 - Do not take a medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to it in the past.
 - If you have been told to avoid a medicine, call your doctor before you take it.
 - If you are or could be pregnant, do not take any medicine other than acetaminophen unless your doctor has told you to.
 - Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than age 20 unless your doctor tells you to.
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Symptoms to watch for during home treatment

Call your doctor if any of the following occur during home treatment:

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- Signs of infection develop.
 - Your knee becomes hard to move or swelling lasts for more than 2 days.
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