

ACTIVE AMERICAN

Ankle Sprains Need Special Attention

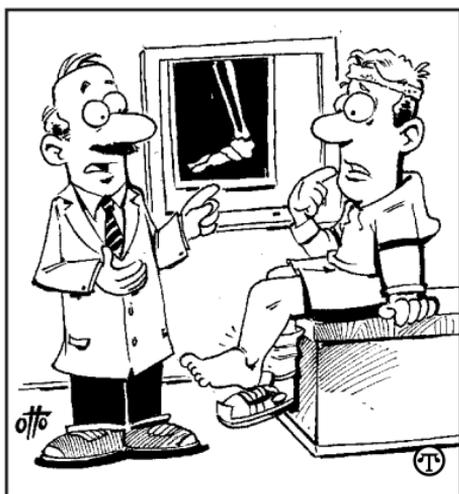
(NAPSA)—Foot and ankle emergencies happen everyday. Broken bones, dislocations, sprains, contusions, infections and other serious injuries can occur at anytime. The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) stresses the importance of seeking immediate treatment from a podiatric physician whenever you sustain a foot or ankle injury.

Ankle sprains are the most common ankle injury caused by fitness-related activities. Although they are relatively common, they are often passed off as “just a sprain” and thus not treated properly. This can result in long-standing pain, swelling, instability and a limitation of your activities.

Proper diagnosis and early treatment are important in the care of ankle sprains. Treatment should begin immediately after the injury occurs, even before you see your podiatric physician. Follow the sports medicine principle RICE:

- **Rest** your injured ankle to prevent further injury.
- **Ice** the area that had been injured for the first 24 hours.
- **Compress** your ankle by wrapping it with an elastic wrap.
- **Elevate** the ankle above the level of your heart to minimize swelling.

Seek medical attention from a podiatrist as soon as possible after sustaining any ankle injury. He or she will want to take X-rays of your foot and ankle to make sure



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you have not fractured any bones. The podiatrist may also consider other diagnostic tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to determine the extent of the ligament damage.

Treatment for ankle sprains depends on the severity. Most will require the RICE therapy and immobilization with a brace to prevent further injury. Physical therapy and strengthening exercises may also be prescribed to speed recovery. More severe sprains may require a cast and the use of crutches for several weeks.

For more information on foot health please contact the American Podiatric Medical Association by calling 1-800-FOOTCARE or visiting www.apma.org on the Web.