



## Trauma

### INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING AN ACUTE INJURY

#### **Rest-Ice-Compression-Elevation (R.I.C.E.)**

R.I.C.E. stands for "Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation", the standard treatment method used for sprains, strains, and severe bruises or contusions. R.I.C.E. helps limit pain and swelling after an injury. It also helps injuries heal faster.

Begin R.I.C.E. as soon as possible after your injury. This method is an effective mode of treatment for the first 48 to 72 hours.

#### **Rest:**

Pain is your body's way of telling you to rest an injured area.

- No sports.
- Avoid any activity that causes pain, swelling and discomfort.

#### **Ice:**

Cold reduces pain and swelling in injured muscles, joints and ligaments.

- Apply ice and wrap it (for compression) around the injured area with a towel or ace bandage, for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Repeat every 2 to 3 hours while awake for the first 48 to 72 hours.
- Applications can include crushed ice in a wet towel or cloth, a bag of frozen vegetables, or a cold pack.

#### **Compression:**

Between ice applications, apply compression around the injured area to help prevent swelling and to provide support.

- Wrap the injured area firmly with an elastic (ace) bandage or the appropriate splint. If a hand or foot tingles, becomes discoloured, or feels cold to the touch, the bandage or splint may be too tight. Rewrap it more loosely.
- If the elastic bandage or splint becomes too loose, rewrap it.
- Do not wear an elastic bandage or splint overnight.

#### **Elevation:**

Keeping the injured area raised helps reduce swelling, pain, and throbbing. It also speeds up healing.

- Elevate the injured area. If appropriate, rest it upon a pillow for comfort.

#### **Seek medical attention if you notice any of the following:**

- Fingers or toes feel numb, are cold to the touch, or change colour
- Skin looks shiny or tight
- Pain, swelling, or bruising worsens and does not improve with elevation