



Knee injuries

You came to the emergency department after hurting your knee. The doctor examined you and, if needed, arranged an X-ray. There is no sign of an injury that needs urgent treatment today.

What is it?

Most knee injuries are sprains or strains of the ligaments, muscles or the cartilage cushions inside the knee. The knee may be swollen, stiff and painful to walk on. Some injuries cannot be fully seen on an X-ray, so a follow-up check matters. Most knee sprains improve a lot within 2 to 6 weeks.

Looking after yourself at home

- Rest the knee for the first 2 to 3 days, but do not keep it completely still.
- Put a cold pack wrapped in a cloth on the knee for 15 to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours.
- Raise your leg on pillows when sitting or lying down to reduce swelling.
- Use crutches or a brace if you were given them, and follow the advice on how much weight to take.
- Gently bend and straighten your knee a few times each day as the pain allows.
- Avoid sport, running and heavy work until you can walk without limping.

Medicines

- Paracetamol can help the pain, unless your doctor told you not to. Follow the packet or your doctor's instructions.
- Ibuprofen may help too, unless your doctor said no. Avoid it if you have a stomach ulcer, kidney disease, some asthma, or are pregnant.

Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre within 1 week to check your knee again.
- If the knee keeps locking, giving way or stays very swollen, ask for a referral to a knee specialist or physiotherapist.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- You cannot put any weight on the leg at all
- The knee becomes hot, red and very swollen, or you have a fever
- Your foot or lower leg becomes cold, pale, blue or numb
- Pain, swelling or redness in your calf
- The knee locks and you cannot straighten it
- Pain that keeps getting worse despite rest and pain relief



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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