

March 15, 2015

## Ask the Nurse Practitioner



### Ankle Sprain

Q: Is an x-ray required for all ankle injuries?

A: Imaging is not always required, only for Class 3 sprains or tenderness at the malleolus. The health care provider will obtain a thorough history of the present illness (HPI), classify the level of the strain and proceed from his or her examination.

Q: Which is the better choice of treatment for a sprain-heat or cold?

A: Ice should be applied to an injury within the first 48 hours. Ice reduces swelling and inflammation.

Q: It's been 3 weeks and my ankle is still swollen, and it is not getting better. Why is that?

A: If there is little improvement or if the condition has worsened in 2-3 weeks, a referral to an orthopedist is necessary.

## Ankle Sprain: Diagnosis and Treatment

By Patricia Smith, FNP – Knoxville, TN

An ankle sprain occurs when there is sudden stress on one or more of the supporting ligaments of the ankle. The ligaments mobilize the muscles and ankle joint in place. An ankle sprain often occurs when stepping off a curb, or into a hole on the pavement. If an injury is sports related, it is often due to jumping or falling on an outstretched ankle. Basketball, football and cross-country running are sports in which sprains occur most frequently. An ankle sprain is the most common musculoskeletal injury; approximately 85% of all ankle injuries in adults are due to sprains. Another common occurrence leading to ankle sprains involves a truck driver stepping down from a truck onto uneven pavement, usually into a hole.

Ankle sprains are classified by the degree of injury to the ankle ligament.

- **Class 1:** Joint is stable, minimal pain, swelling and redness. Able to bear weight
- **Class 2:** Severe swelling and redness. The ligament is appreciably torn but the joint is stable.
- **Class 3:** Unable to bear weight, loss of function and motion, sensation of a "popping" or a "snap" at the ankle, locking of the joint, or diffuse swelling which may indicate bleeding.

Imaging is recommended for an ankle injury if there is pain near the malleoli (bony prominence on each side of the ankle) and the inability to bear weight. If the sprain is a Class 1 or 2, early treatment includes the PRICE therapy (Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation). The purpose of early intervention (within the first 48 hours) focuses on regaining range of motion, early mobilization of joints and protecting against re-injury. Ice may be applied to an injury as many times as possible for 20 minutes for the first 48 hours, or until the swelling has subsided. Raise the ankle above the level of the heart. Anti-inflammatory medications such as Motrin 400 mg every 4-6 hours are effective.

Functional rehabilitation is critical regardless of the grade of injury. This should be performed under the supervision of a physical therapist if the injury is a serious sprain. If the injury is a Class 1 or 2 sprain, exercises such as rotating the ankle or toe rotation may be beneficial. Strengthening exercises such as placing the foot in a tube, or loop, and pulling the tube while the foot/ankle resists the pulling motion are beneficial. Within 7-10 days, pain and swelling should decrease. Remember, once an injury has occurred, the joint will never be as strong which could increase the chance of re-injury unless strengthening exercises are continued.



## Fungal Infections - Athlete's foot, Jock Itch and Ringworm

By Jeff Owen, FNP – Oklahoma City, OK

A fungus can grow on your skin, hair or nails. As it grows, it spreads out in a circle, leaving normal-looking skin in the middle. At the edge of the ring, the skin looks red and scaly. Because of the way it looks, this fungal infection is often called "Ringworm." If you have a fungal infection you may see small, red spots that grow into large rings almost anywhere on your body, including your scalp. The rash may also itch.

"Athlete's foot" occurs on the feet and between the toes. The skin may become itchy and red, with cracking of the skin. The infection may also spread to the toenails, causing your toenails to become thick, yellow, and crumbly. It can also spread to your hands and fingernails.



"Jock Itch" grows in the moist, warm area of the groin. Jock Itch generally occurs in men, and can be itchy and painful.

You can get a fungal infection by touching a person who has a fungus or from damp surfaces, like the floors in public showers or locker rooms. You can even catch a fungal infection from your pets. The infection on animals usually looks like a patch of skin with the fur missing.

The best way to know if you have a skin infection is to visit your health care provider. Other skin problems can look similar to a fungal infection, but require different treatments.

Usually, the first treatment for a fungal infection is a topical antifungal medication. You may only need to use it for a few weeks. Areas other than the groin (jock itch) can be harder to treat. Difficult fungal infections may require taking an antifungal medicine by mouth. This usually takes longer and treatment can last several months.

Since all medications have potential side effects, discuss treatment options with your health care provider to determine which treatment is right for you.

### Ways to Prevent Fungal Infections

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your skin clean &amp; dry.</li> <li>• Dry your feet &amp; toes carefully after using a public shower or locker room.</li> <li>• Always wear footwear in public places.</li> <li>• At home, take your shoes off and expose your feet to the air.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change your socks and underwear daily, especially in warm weather.</li> <li>• Limit thick clothing during warm weather. Sweating promotes the growth of fungal infections.</li> <li>• Don't share towels or clothing with others.</li> <li>• Check your pets for areas of hair loss. Regularly, ask your veterinarian to check them.</li> </ul> |
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Source: Familydoctor.org, 2014.

### We Want to Hear From You

Road to Better Health is a new publication designed to provide you with relevant health and wellness information. We seek your input and comments to improve the newsletter.

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## The Wellness Corner: Hummus – Deliciously Satisfying and Nutritious

A recent article in the Huffington Post titled “10 reasons why we should all be eating more Hummus” cited numerous nutritional benefits to the chickpea based spread. Included in these are its potential for helping with weight management (protein and fiber content curbs hunger), improved energy (high iron content), reduced cancer risk (folate and dietary fiber benefit colon health) and overall heart health as part of the “Mediterranean diet”.



But aside from all of this a much more compelling argument can be made (at least from your taste bud's perspective) that Hummus is absolutely delicious! It can be purchased or easily made in a multitude of flavors. The Sabra company makes 14 different flavors including roasted red pepper, chipotle, "supremely spicy," olive tapenade, spinach and artichoke, "luscious lemon" and basil pesto. The basic recipe (which includes chickpeas, garlic, tahini and olive oil) can be tweaked in endless ways to give you a never ending array of tantalizing

tastes. And while commonly used as a dip with veggies or pita/pretzel chips, Hummus also makes a delicious spread on your sandwich or can be used as a healthy replacement for mayonnaise in dishes like chicken or tuna salad.

### Roasted Red Pepper Hummus

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cans of chick peas (garbanzo beans), drained
- 2 tbsp tahini (sesame seed paste)
- ¼ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1- 12 oz. jar roasted red peppers, drained into bowl for later thinning
- Salt and pepper
- 2 dashes cayenne pepper



#### **Directions:**

In a food processor add chick peas, yogurt, tahini, olive oil, cumin, and garlic. Pulse until smooth.

Add the drained peppers, 1 tsp. of salt, 1/4 tsp. ground pepper, and a dash or two of cayenne pepper. Pulse again until hummus is smooth. If hummus is too thick add a tablespoon or two of the reserved liquid from the red peppers. Store covered in refrigerator.

## About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel (UCT), in partnership with Pilot Flying J, addresses one of the trucking industry's biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UCT clinics offer Occupational Medical services (DOT/non-DOT physicals, workers comp, sleep apnea screening, urine/hair drug screens, etc.) and Primary/Urgent Care services (chronic disease screening and management (e.g. diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension), blood pressure checks, Men's & Women's wellness exams, wound care, cold/cough/flu, upper respiratory infections, sinus infections, ear infections, muscle pain/strain, etc.).

UrgentCareTravel's affordable **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** includes unlimited FREE visits (in-clinic services) at UrgentCareTravel locations. With health insurance plans costing more, providing less medical coverage and requiring higher deductible payments, UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** is a cost-effective option to address the healthcare needs of drivers, local businesses and communities.

