



# Sprains, Strains and Breaks Slow to Heal

Get the care you need for ankle injuries

**A**nkle sprains and fractures are frequent injuries in athletes, and can even strike with a misstep in everyday life. Marcus Roux, M.D., orthopaedic surgeon on the medical staff and chief of the department of surgery at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie, debunks some of the common myths associated with ankle injuries.

**Myth:** If you can walk, you haven't fractured your ankle.

**Fact:** Some fractures are stable enough to walk on—walking is not a telltale sign that everything is OK. Plus, everyone has a different threshold for pain.

**Myth:** You should give an ankle injury a couple of days to see if it is healing.

**Fact:** If your ankle is swelling and bruising immediately after you injure it and the swelling doesn't subside with ice and elevation, you should call your doctor or orthopaedist, or visit the emergency room if it's after hours.

**Myth:** A broken bone is worse than a sprain.

**Fact:** In many cases that's true, but some sprains, particularly high ankle sprains, can be more severe and take longer to heal than some simple fractures. A high ankle sprain can leave you on the sidelines for six to eight weeks.

**Myth:** An ankle that bothers you months or even years after an injury means the injury never healed properly.

**Fact:** That's possible, but there are other culprits to consider: tendinitis; impingement syndrome, where scar tissue can build up in the joint; or a cartilage injury could also be causing ongoing ankle pain. For tendinitis, doctors may recommend rest, physical therapy, moist heat and activity modification. Scar tissue buildup and cartilage injuries may require surgery. ● *By Stephanie Thurrott*

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

It's important to give ankle injuries the time they need to heal. "A lot depends on having the correct expectations," says Marcus Roux, M.D., orthopaedic surgeon and chief of the department of surgery at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie. "Ankle sprains can linger for six to eight weeks, and in athletes who play sports with a lot of running and cutting, swelling can last for eight to 12 weeks."

- Most ankle sprains will heal with rest, ice, compression and activity modification.
- High ankle sprains will need some immobilization and a slow return to weight-bearing activities.
- Stable fractures can be immobilized in a cast or boot until they heal.
- Severe or unstable ankle fractures might need surgery.



FIND A PHYSICIAN

**Play It Smart**

For a referral to an orthopaedist on the medical staff at Baylor Waxahachie, call **1-800-4BAYLOR** or visit **BSWHealth.com/WaxOrtho**.