

Compliments, comments & complaints

If you'd like to compliment, comment or complain about our service please contact our Customer Services Department:

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest
Room AF3, Local Care Centre
200 Mount Gould Road
Plymouth
PL4 7PY

Tel: 01752 435201

Email: customerservicespch@nhs.net

Contact details

The Minor Injuries Units are open every day of the year, including Bank Holidays.

Minor Injuries Unit Cumberland Centre

Damerel Close
Plymouth
PL1 4JZ

Tel: 01752 434390

Opening times: 8:30am - 9pm

Minor Injuries Unit South Hams Hospital

Plymouth Road
Kingsbridge
TQ7 1AT

Tel: 01548 852349

Opening times: 9am - 5pm

Minor Injuries Unit Tavistock Hospital

Spring Hill
Tavistock
PL19 8LD

Tel: 01822 612233

Opening times: 8am - 10pm

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 Livewell Southwest

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Calf Injury Information & Advice



Minor Injuries Unit

Cumberland Centre
South Hams Hospital
Tavistock Hospital

You have a calf injury / strain.

What is it?

It is a strain of one of the muscles in the lower leg, it usually occurs during some form of physical or sporting activity for example; running fast, changing direction quickly, fast workout routines.

Signs and symptoms

Pain is usually in the inside of the calf and about half way between the ankle and the knee. The onset of pain is usually sudden and severe enough to stop you immediately and sometimes even felling the individual. A few days post injury you may notice blood below the skin which is a good sign as this helps the injured muscle heal.

Tenderness is usually at the junction between the lower end of the calcaneal muscle and the upper end of the Achilles tendon. An individual might experience pain and weakness on resisted ankle flexion.

On occasion there may be evidence of referred pain from the lower back.

Investigations

Usually none are required although if the injury is not healing as expected, ultrasound may be required. Surgery is hardly every required, unless there is a significant tear of the upper part of the Achilles tendon.

Treatment

- Ice packs applied over the injury area.
- Regular analgesia (paracetamol) and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory tablets (ibuprofen) if tolerated.
- A Physiotherapy Rehabilitation Programme may be of benefit to restore full range of movement of the knee and ankle, building strength and endurance.
- An orthopaedic shoe wedge put under the inside part of heel can help in the early recovery phase as it acts as a shock absorber taking some tension off the injured calf muscle.

Recovery

Average recovery time is between 2 - 4 weeks, however attempts to speed this process up can often result in recurrent strain in only a partially healed injury.

Do no HARM for 72 hours after injury

Heat: Should be avoided when inflammation is developing as heat encourages blood flow. After 72 hours you may use heat then which can be soothing.

Alcohol: Avoid as this can increase bleeding and swelling, and decrease healing.

Running / sport: May cause further damage.

Massage: May increase bleeding and swelling, but as with heat, massage may be beneficial after 72 hours.

Should I take painkillers?

Try whichever painkillers you would normally take for a headache. If you follow the advice in this leaflet, the pain should begin to ease but it may take a while. You may not be walking on your ankle properly for a couple of weeks.

Should I exercise?

After the first couple of days of RICE you may begin to exercise it - this may be painful at first. These exercises should help reduce the swelling and prevent stiffness:

- Point your toes and feet, and then bring them back towards you.
- Keeping your heel still, move your foot from left to right.
- Circle your foot clockwise and anticlockwise.

As soon as possible you should try to walk properly wearing good supportive shoes, not high heels or sandals, dolly shoes or flip flops.

Avoid any strenuous walking, running or sport until you can do all the exercises without pain - it may take 4 - 6 weeks.

Remember it may take a couple of weeks for the pain to disappear. If there is no improvement within this time please return to the MIU or your GP.