

Soft tissue injuries occur frequently, both in sporting and non sporting situations.

If there is extensive injury, it is important to get medical advice to rule out a fracture or a more serious injury.

The PRICE guidelines below should be followed for up to 3-5 days.

Treating Inflammation with PRICE

Tissue injury usually involves damage to small blood vessels that results in bleeding at the site of injury. This bleeding leads to the 5 main signs of inflammation; heat, redness, swelling, pain and loss of function. The inflammatory reaction is necessary as it is part of the natural healing process. However, the body over-reacts to sudden injury and as a result more inflammatory fluid accumulates that is necessary for healing. This contains a protein which turns to 'scar tissue'. Too much scar tissue can prevent return to normal flexibility and function, and increase the risk of re-injury.

- **PROTECT** – Protect the injured tissue from undue stress that may disrupt healing, and/or cause further injury. Make sure the mode of protection can accommodate swelling.
- **REST** – This reduces the energy requirements of the area, avoids unnecessary increase in blood flow, ensures protection of the area and optimises health.
- **ICE** – Help constrict blood vessels thereby limiting bleeding and reducing accumulation of unnecessary scar tissue. Crushed ice wrapped in a damp towel (to prevent ice burn) is best. It should be applied immediately after injury for 20 minutes, then every 3-4 hours. It should be applied for a maximum of 5-10 minutes over bony areas.
- **COMPRESSION** – Use of comprehensive bandaging or Tubigrip.
- **ELEVATION** – Lowers the blood pressure at the area and helps limit bleeding.

Early mobilisation is critical, so commence gentle movements of the joints or affected areas as soon as comfortable.

If your injury does not begin to improve within 5 days, seek medical advice.