

There is a good chance that while exercising, playing sports, or stepping on an uneven surface you sprained your ankle--about 30,000 people in the US do it every day. An ankle sprain tears the ligaments that connect your foot bones to your leg bones. While common, ankle sprains vary greatly in severity and proper treatment is essential to ensure complete healing. Incomplete healing of your ankle sprain leads to chronic ankle instability where you lose your ability to confidently walk on uneven surfaces.



Ankle sprains typically occur during sports or normal everyday life events such as stepping “wrong” off a curb or into a hole when walking or running on a grassy surface. You may notice immediate pain and swelling. Depending on the severity of the sprain, you may be unable to walk on your ankle.

Treating your ankle sprain properly may prevent chronic ankle instability. For all ankle sprains, follow the **R.I.C.E.** guidelines:

- ! **R**est your ankle by not walking on it and consider the use of an ankle brace or Walking Boot
- ! **I**ce using crushed ice in a Ziplock applied for 20-30 minutes at a time to minimize pain
- ! **C**ompression with the use of an ACE Wrap bandage or elastic ankle sleeve
- ! **E**levation of the injured ankle above the level of your heart for the first 24-48 hours

NSAIDS (Ibuprofen or Aleve) help to diminish the acute pain of ankle sprains.

Evaluation by Dr. Buchanan is warranted for suspected ankle fractures and for more severe sprains that fail to heal properly. Evaluation typically includes a thorough history and physical exam and high-quality digital ankle x-rays.

A significant percentage of ankle sprains have associated injuries (tendon tears, cartilage damage, scar tissue build-up, hairline fractures) that fail to improve with time. Talk to Dr. Buchanan if you feel you may be suffering from one of these complications.

For chronic ankle pain and instability that fails to improve with a non-operative treatment program, surgery may be indicated. Surgical procedures are performed on an outpatient basis and use minimally invasive techniques such as ankle arthroscopy to remove scar tissue and loose bone fragments and repair or reconstruct torn ligaments and tendons.

Dr. Buchanan has been treating ankle sprains and performing ankle ligament repair surgery for over 15 years. He utilizes the latest cutting-edge and minimally invasive techniques designed to quickly return you to your pre-injury level of function. His goal is to provide you with a strong, confidence-inspiring, pain-free ankle that allows you to enjoy life to its fullest!

Call 703-525-2200 to schedule a visit with Dr. Buchanan to discuss your ankle sprain or chronic ankle instability.