



# Student Health Center

## UNC Wilmington

### INSTRUCTION SHEET: KNEE SPRAIN, MILD

#### Treatment: Immobilizer/Wrap

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a mild sprain of your knee. A sprain is a stretching or tear in the ligaments and tendons (rope-like bands holding bones and muscles in place) of a joint.

Despite the fact that no break or dislocation of the bones was seen, a sprain is a significant injury to the joint, and should be treated, not ignored. Treatment can help prevent long-term problems with the knee.

#### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR SPRAIN:

- 1- Above all, put the knee to rest! Resting the knee not only decreases pain, it also helps heal the knee more quickly. Stay off the leg as much as possible the next two days. Wear the immobilizer/wrap. After two days, gradually ease back into a normal amount of walking. If the knee begins to hurt, cut back on walking again.
- 2- Wear the knee immobilizer/wrap whenever you are awake. The knee immobilizer/wrap supports the knee and helps prevent further injury.
- 3- Elevating the knee will reduce swelling, especially in the first 48 hours after injury. Keep the knee up on pillows, above the level of the heart. Let gravity work to reduce the swelling.
- 4- Apply cold packs to the knee off-and-on for the first 48 hours after injury. Cold helps ease discomfort and prevent additional swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the knee, causing discomfort. Rather, aim for coolness, yet comfort, applying a layer or two of towel between the cold pack and knee.
- 5- After 48 hours, apply heat in the form of warm soaks. Moist heat increases blood circulation in the knee tissues, promoting healing.
- 6- Make a follow-up appointment as directed. Sometimes breaks are difficult to see on initial X-rays; repeat exam and X-rays may be necessary. Take the initial X-rays to your appointment if you seen a personal/referral doctor (pick the X-rays up prior to your appointment).
- 7- If you are having severe pain or an unusual problem, return to the Student Health Center or see your personal/referral doctor promptly.
- 8- Realize that once a knee is sprained, it may be prone to further injury. Allow the knee to fully heal before you attempt any sports. Avoid contact sports long-term if possible.