

## The PRICE is right!

### QUESTION

I play a lot of football and suffer occasional ankle sprains or leg bruising where I've been kicked. I'm confused about the best treatment for these, as I see some team mates using heat, and others cold sprays?

### ANSWER

The main priority is to try and reduce the swelling that arises and any type of heat – including a hot bath, will make this worse and so should not be used in the early management of acute injuries. By controlling the swelling you give yourself the best chance of earlier rehabilitation of the affected body part and limit any potential scarring. Immediately after any soft tissue injury, use the P.R.I.C.E regime for the first 72 hours. Consult a doctor first if there is any concern about a broken bone (fracture), dislocation, significant bleeding or head / neck injury.

**PROTECTION** of the injured soft tissue from further damage by the use of crutches, slings or splints

**REST** is required to prevent dense scar tissue. Complete rest for too long will lead to muscle weakening and poor scar tissue. The period of rest should be discussed with a medical practitioner

**ICE** (Ice pack / frozen peas bag) applied in a damp cloth reduces pain and swelling – apply for 20 minutes 4 times a day for 3 days

**COMPRESSION** can be applied by a tubigrip – preferably by a practitioner – for first 72 hrs and will prevent excess swelling and thus pain and improved range of movement

**ELEVATION** of the injured part above heart level for the first 72 hrs to help excess fluid drain away and reduce swelling

The injury should be reviewed by an appropriate health care professional at the earliest available opportunity for a definitive diagnosis and continuing management.

If, after reading these guidelines you have any questions concerning physical activity/exercise related health issues please forward to me and I will do my best to answer them in further issues.

Dr Zafar Iqbal

MBBS, BSc, DCH, DRCOG, MRCP, MSc, MFSEM (UK), Dip PCR

First Team Dr Liverpool FC

Sports and Exercise Medicine Physician