

Strongsville High School Athletic Training



Southwest General
Sports Medicine

Edema (swelling)/Pain Control

How do I control edema/Pain?

1. P.R.I.C.E.
 - a. Protect:
 - i. Protect the injured area from further injury as directed by an Athletic Trainer and/or physician with a compression sleeve, ace wrap, tape, padding and/or splint/brace if applicable.
 - b. Rest:
 - i. No sport activity and/or modified activity as directed by an Athletic Trainer and/or physician
 - ii. Non-weight bearing and/or partial weight bearing if applicable until otherwise directed by an Athletic Trainer and/or physician
 - c. Ice: utilize for pain; ice will not reduce edema
 - i. Bag – 15-20 minutes/application; re-apply when skin temperature returns to normal as pain dictates
 - ii. Ice immersion – 8-10'; repeat as above
 - d. Compression: Compression is an excellent way to decrease edema and subsequently pain from edema. Compression sleeves or ace wraps are effective tools to reduce edema. There should be no wrinkles and the compression should start below the edema and end above it with a gradual decrease in tightness. The compression should be worn at all times unless icing, rehabbing or showering. The goal is to push the edema into the lymphatic system toward the heart. Remove or loosen the compression if uncomfortable to tingling/numbness occur below the compression.
 - e. Elevation: Elevate the injured area above the heart

NOTE: NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs – i.e, ibuprofen [Motrin/Advil] or naproxen [Aleve]) are NOT recommended to reduce edema of an acute injury! These medications disrupt the body's natural cascade of healing and shouldn't be utilized at least for the first 72 hours post-injury. Contact the SHS ATCs or your physician with any questions.

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