

Contact your GP if:

- Self-care measures are not helping.
- There is an obvious deformity.
- You cannot move an injured joint.
- Your symptoms are getting worse.
- You are not able to put any weight on the injury.

Your doctor may recommend pain medication and/or physiotherapy treatment. Surgery can sometimes be required for a more severe muscle tear.

Physiotherapists can recommend special exercises to help you heal.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202401-01-SS
Created: January 2024/ Review Date: January 2026

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Sprains and strains

Emergency Department

King's Mill Hospital

Mansfield Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Notts NG17 4JL
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 2789

Newark Hospital

Boundary Road
Newark
Notts NG24 4DE
Telephone: 01636 681681

Sprains and strains are injuries to soft tissue. Soft tissues connect, support and surround bones and organs in our bodies. The most common soft tissues injured are ligaments, muscles, and tendons.

What are the differences between a sprain and strain?

A sprain is a stretched or torn ligament, which is the soft tissue that connects two bones together at a joint. Common areas for sprains are the ankles, knees and wrists.

A strain is a stretched or torn muscle or tendon (the soft tissue that connects muscle to bone).

What are the symptoms of sprains and strains?

Symptoms of a sprain include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Loss of power when moving the affected joint.

Symptoms of a strain include:

- Pain
- Muscle spasms
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Trouble moving the muscle.

How are sprains and strains treated?

Sprains and strains can take time to heal. It's important to get the right treatment to help you recover faster.

To help decrease the swelling and pain the recommended initial treatment for a sprain or strain includes the following self-care measures:

- Resting and not doing things that cause pain for at least two days.
- Ice for 10-20 minutes at a time. Reapply every two hours for the first 24 hours. Do not apply ice directly to the skin – wrap the icepack in a damp cloth. Ice three times a day for the next few days.
- Elevate the injured limb to reduce swelling.
- Wrap the injured area in a compression bandage and extend the bandage well beyond the injury.

You may need a brace or crutches to avoid putting weight on the injury.

