Welty Student Health Center

**Sprains**

**What to know...what to do**

- A sprain is a stretched or torn ligament. Ligaments connect one bone to another bone at a joint and help keep the bones from moving out of place.
- Symptoms of sprains may include: pain or tenderness, swelling, bruising, inability to bear weight on the joint, or stiffness.
- Sprains are diagnosed clinically by history of injury, occasionally X-rays will be taken to rule out a fracture.
- Sprains are usually treated with **RICE** therapy.

**Rest**—Rest your extremity, use crutches, and just “take it easy”.

**Ice**—Use ice packs to decrease swelling, pain and bruising. Use ice up to 3 days after injury.

**Compression**—wrapping your injury to avoid swelling and bruising. Keep injury wrapped for 2 days or a week depending on severity.

**Elevation**—Raising injury above the level of your heart (if possible) will help prevent swelling. Keep injury elevated for 2-3 hours a day if possible.

- Your provider will decide if you need a brace for additional support. Sprains last from 1-3 days or up to weeks. Remember stay off your injury!!
- Tylenol EX, 2 tablets every 4 hours or 3 Ibuprofen (200mg) tablets every four hours should relieve the pain.

**Visit the Welty Health Center if...**

- Swelling or pain intensifies
- Numbness or tingling in distal extremities