



A sprain is an injury in which a muscle or ligament is torn or overstretched. The ligaments of the lower back are vulnerable to sprains. These ligaments are important for stabilizing the spinal column.

CAUSES

- Performing a stressful act while off-balance
- Repetitive stressful activities that involve movement of the lower back
- Direct hit (trauma) to the lower back

SYMPTOMS

- Severe pain in the lower back
- Sometimes, a feeling of a "pop," "snap" or tear at the time of injury
- Tenderness and sometimes swelling at the injury site
- Bruising (contusion) within 48 hours of injury
- Muscle spasms in the back

TREATMENT

- Ice to reduce pain and inflammation
- Medication
 - NSAIDS help decrease swelling, pain and fever. **ALWAYS ASK YOUR PROVIDER IF NSAIDS ARE SAFE.**
 - Acetaminophen to decrease pain
 - Prescription pain medicine
 - Muscle relaxant to control spasms
- Stretching exercises, strengthening exercises and posture training to help stabilize the back, strengthen muscles and prevent recurrence of symptoms

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in two to four weeks, despite treatment.
- You develop new symptoms.
- You are generally not feeling well.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop numbness or weakness in either leg.
- You lose bowel or bladder function.