

Patient information

What is a haematoma?

A haematoma is a severe bruise within the soft tissues, usually a muscle. It often results from injury. Symptoms will resolve in time but it can take several months for the swelling and the bruising to resolve. Common muscles where haematomas occur are calf, quadriceps and hamstrings.

How to treat a haematoma.

For the initial period after the injury the main treatment is elevation and ice.

Ice – a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp tea towel for 10-15 minutes, repeat this regularly but ensure there is a two-hour gap in between applications.

Elevation -elevate the area, above the heart if possible, when resting. Continue to elevate the affected area as much as possible during the healing process.

After two weeks post injury the application of heat is recommended (a wheat bag or hot water bottle) for periods of 10-15 minutes and Gentle stretching of the muscle is important- hold and stretch for 30 seconds and repeat four times (repeat three times a day)

Massage – gently massage the haematoma starting from the outside and do slow rhythmic, circular movements.

The haematoma will gradually be absorbed by the body. Keeping active is important.

Exercises that you may find useful:

Hamstring stretch in sitting.

Place the foot on a low stool/step keeping the knee straight. Reach both hands down to the toes until you feel a pulling sensation down the back of your thigh. Hold this position for 30 seconds – repeat 4 times.

Quadriceps stretches.

Lying on your front, bend your knee and pull your foot towards your buttock until you feel a pulling sensation on the front of your thigh. Make sure your knees stay close together and your hip does not rise off the floor. Hold this position for 30 seconds – repeat 4 times.

Calf stretch.

Stand with your hands flat against a wall. Place one foot in front of the other with your toes pointing forwards. Lunge forwards, bending the front knee but keeping your back knee straight. Keep your heels on the floor. Lunge until you feel a pulling sensation on the back of your calf. Hold this position for 30 seconds – repeat 4 times.

Remain well hydrated and remain as active as possible to reduce your risks of developing a deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

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