

Thigh Muscle Strain (Quadriceps Injury)

What is a muscle strain?

A strain means that there are small tears in the muscle. A strain may be caused by:

- A direct hit or blow to the thigh muscle.
- A forceful muscle movement.
- Overstretching of the muscle.

What are the symptoms?

- Pain in the front of the thigh with exercises, stretching and activities.
- Tender to touch.
- Swelling.
- Bruising of the area. It can be purple or dark red.
- The sore area may also be warm to the touch.



How is it diagnosed?

The strain is diagnosed by the location of the pain and the symptoms. Your healthcare provider may also ask about your activities. In rare cases, an MRI may be needed.

How is it treated?

Pain medicine, decreased activity, resting and icing the area may help with pain and swelling. Other treatments may include:

- Stop any activities that could cause a repeat of the injury.
- Icing. Use a bag of crushed ice, or frozen peas or corn. You can reuse these items as an ice pack. **Do not eat** the corn or peas once they have been used as an ice pack.
 - Put a towel between skin and bag. If you put the ice pack directly on the skin, it may cause frost bite. Put the bag on the sore area.
 - Leave on for 15 to 20 minutes. Do not use heat or massage until you are told to do so.
- Using an elastic bandage (Ace® wrap). This puts pressure (compression) on the thigh to help decrease swelling. Take the wrap off at night.
- Crutches may be needed.
- Exercises that stretch and strengthen the thigh muscles may be needed. Range of motion exercises will also be given. Regular therapy helps you learn an exercise routine. This will help you return to regular activities.
- If the tear is severe, surgery is rarely needed.

ALERT: Call your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if you have special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.