

# Splint Care After an Injury

## What is a splint?

A splint is a padded support that holds part of an injured arm or leg in the best position for healing. The splint is secured in place by an elastic bandage. The purpose of a splint is to prevent movement and protect a fracture, possible fracture, or torn ligament until the swelling has gone down. When the swelling is gone, an orthopedist can apply a full cast if needed.

## How can I take care of my child?

**Ice.** Apply a cold pack or crushed ice in a plastic bag to the injured area for 20 minutes of each hour for the next 4 hours.

**Elevation.** If the leg is injured, elevate the leg on pillows and at rest for the next 24 hours. This will limit the amount of swelling that occurs. If the arm is injured, your child should wear the sling provided by your healthcare provider. Keep the injured part elevated above the level of the heart to limit swelling.

**Pain Relief.** Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) in the appropriate dosage for pain. Continue this for at least the first 48 hours. Your child's pain medicine is \_\_\_\_\_. Your child's dose is \_\_\_\_\_ given \_\_\_\_\_ times a day for \_\_\_\_ days.

**Splint Care.** Don't get the splint wet. If it becomes wet, dry it with a hair dryer. Don't walk on or put any pressure on the splint because it isn't designed to handle weight. Don't stick anything down into the splint, such as a coat hanger or other device, to scratch an itch.

**Signs of a Tight Splint.** If the elastic bandage is too tight, it can decrease circulation to the fingers or toes. If any of the following problems occur, loosen the elastic bandage:

- Your child feels numbness, tingling, or increased pain.
- The fingers or toes turn to a different color (pale or bluish) than the color of the fingers and toes of the noninjured arm or leg.
- The fingers and toes become swollen.

## When does my child need to be seen again?

Most children who have a splint need it to be replaced by a cast in a few days.

Make an appointment with \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ days.

## When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call immediately if:

Your child feels numbness, tingling, or increased pain.

The fingers or toes turn a different color (pale or bluish) than the color of the

fingers or toes of the noninjured arm or leg.

The fingers and toes become swollen.

These problems are not back to normal within a half-hour of loosening the elastic bandage.

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This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

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