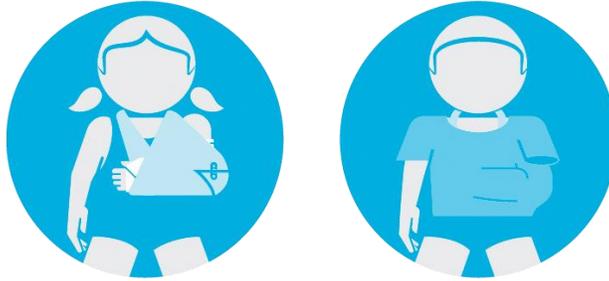


Supracondylar humerus fracture without displacement

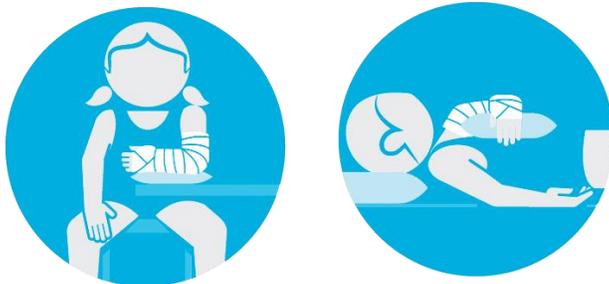
Your child has broken their arm just above the elbow. A backslab (half cast) and sling are required to allow the bones to heal properly.



It is often easiest to place the backslab and sling under loose clothing instead of through a shirt sleeve.

The first 24-48 hours after injury

Your child's arm, hand and fingers may swell in the first 24 -48 hours after injury. To decrease this swelling, your child should rest their arm up onto a pillow when sitting or lying down.



You should encourage your child to bend and straighten their fingers every hour while they are awake. You should check the temperature, colour and movement of their fingers about every 4 hours while they are awake.

You child will have pain in their elbow initially. Medication such as ibuprofen (e.g. Advil™) as needed following the directions on the bottle will help decrease their pain.

Signs of a problem

- Severe pain when moving their fingers
- Fingers that are blue or white
- Fingers that are cold (you can compare them to the fingers on their other hand)
- Fingers that cannot curl up or straighten out
- Numbness or pins and needles in their fingers

If your child has any of these signs, rest your child's arm on a pillow while lying down for 30 minutes.



If the problem does not get better, call your doctor, or go to the hospital.

Follow-up appointment

Your child will have a review by the doctor in the fracture clinic about 7-10 days after injury. The doctor will show you how to take off the cast at home 3 weeks after the date of injury. No further follow-up is usually required.

After 3 weeks

Remove the backslab 3 weeks after your child broke their arm. Removing the backslab is not difficult. When taking off the backslab, carefully cut up front soft part of the half cast with scissors. After removing the backslab, your child's arm may be dry and itchy and look dirty. Use warm water and soap to gently wash the arm and cream to moisturize the skin.

When the backslab is off, your child can begin moving the elbow. At first, the elbow and wrist may be stiff. The movement will get better with time but this may take up to one year. Physiotherapy is not recommended.

To decrease the risk of rebreaking their arm, your child should not participate in high-risk activities such as playing on monkey-bars, ice-skating, skateboarding and sports for 12 weeks after their injury.

Key Points

- Your child needs a backslab (half cast) to help heal their broken arm.
- You will take off the backslab at home after 3 weeks.
- Your child will need to avoid high-risk activities for a total of 12 weeks after their injury.
- Your child's elbow may need a year to fully recover strength and movement.

Content updated by Dr. Mark Camp and approved by the SKPOP Committee on May 1st 2015.

Original content developed by Preeti Grewal and Dr. William Cole on June 11th, 2009.