

Fractures

Call

Call the doctor if your child:

If you think a bone is broken you should call your child's doctor immediately. If you are not sure, here are some clues that a bone may be broken:

- There is a lot of swelling or bruising in the injured area.
- Your child is limping, or cannot bear weight on the injured leg/ankle/foot.
- Your child refuses to move the part of the body he has injured.
- Your child is complaining of numbness in the injured area.
- You notice an obvious deformity (abnormal shape) to the injured area. The bone under the skin may appear bent, or you may see the bone poking through the skin.
- Your child is having serious pain that does not begin to improve over a short period of time.

Fracture Prevention

- Never leave a young child unattended in a high place such as a changing table, bed, couch, or shopping cart.
- Keep crib rails at the level of your baby's chin or higher.
- Try to avoid using baby walkers.
- Store toys on low shelves where children can reach them without having to climb.
- Place sturdy gates at the top and bottom of stairs so young children cannot fall down the stairs.
- Open windows from the top, if possible. Do not open windows more than 4-8 inches from the bottom. A screen will not prevent your child from falling out a window.
- Place safety locks on windows so your child cannot open them.
- Place bath mats in bathtubs to prevent injuries caused by slipping.

What can I do to care for a broken bone?

- Call your child's doctor or go to the emergency room for an X-ray.
- Do not give pain medicine to your child unless you discuss it with your doctor.
- To relieve pain in older children, wrap ice in a towel and apply to the injured area for 20-30 minutes.
- Do not use ice on babies or toddlers as it may injure their delicate skin.
- Protect the injury from movement. Make a splint out of a rolled-up newspaper or magazine and tie it loosely in place.
- If you think your child has broken a leg bone, do not allow him to walk on it, and do not try to move him yourself. Call an ambulance.

What can I do to care for my child's cast?

- Keep the cast dry. Be careful during bathing and keep your child protected from rain.
- Contact your doctor if the cast breaks or becomes loose.
- Your child's skin may itch under the cast, but do not allow your child to put objects like pens or pencils under the cast.
- Look at the edge of the cast at your child's fingers or toes. If they are pale or blue, or the child has decreased sensation, the cast may be too tight.

The Facts:

All children suffer minor injuries during normal play, but sometimes injuries can be serious, like a fracture or broken bone. A bone may break due to a fall, car crash, or other accident. If your child has a fracture, it is important for him to get appropriate medical care, which may include a cast or splint. Bones that heal incorrectly can affect your child's growth and cause long-term problems.