

## **Proximal humerus fracture: Non-operative management**

Your child has sustained a fracture to the arm (humerus) just below the shoulder. This fracture usually heals well in a simple sling, called a collar and cuff. The sling will help keep your child comfortable while the bone heals.



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

### **The first 24-48 hours after injury**

Your child will have pain in the shoulder initially. Medication such as Ibuprofen and/or Paracetamol as needed (as long as not allergic) following the directions on the package will help decrease the pain.

Although nerve and artery injuries are very rare with this injury, you should return to the Emergency Department if your child develops numbness or tingling in the hand.

### **Follow-up appointment**

You will be notified by the Trauma Assessment Clinic Physiotherapist with regard to review in the Fracture Clinic with the Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, usually about 7-10 days after the injury. A new x-ray may be ordered at that appointment. You will be asked to take off the sling (collar and cuff) 4 weeks after the injury and allow your child to begin moving the shoulder. No further follow-up is usually required.

### **After 3 weeks**

Remove the sling (collar and cuff) 3 weeks after your child broke the arm. With the sling (collar and cuff) off, your child can begin moving the shoulder. At first, the shoulder may be stiff. The movement will get better with time but this may take up to 6 months. Physiotherapy is not usually necessary.

To decrease the risk of re-breaking the arm, your child should not participate in high-risk activities such as playing on monkey-bars, trampolines or contact sports for 6 weeks after the injury. However, your child can return to low-risk activities such as swimming, as soon as the shoulder is comfortable.

If your child continues to have pain in the shoulder 6 weeks after the injury contact your GP.

### **Key Points**

- Your child needs a sling (collar and cuff) to help heal the broken arm.
- You will take off the sling (collar and cuff) at home after 3 weeks.
- Your child will need to avoid high-risk activities for a total of 6 weeks after the injury.
- Your child's shoulder may need 6 months to fully recover strength and movement.
- If your child continues to have pain in the shoulder 6 weeks after the injury contact your GP.