

FRACTURES & DISLOCATIONS



Managing fractures & dislocations

Signs & symptoms

- pain at or near the site of the injury
- difficult or impossible normal movement
- loss of power
- deformity or abnormal mobility
- tenderness
- swelling
- discolouration and bruising

NOTE

- DO NOT attempt to force a fracture or dislocation back into place—this could cause further injuries.
- It can be difficult for a first aider to tell whether the injury is a fracture, dislocation, sprain or strain. If in doubt, always treat as a fracture.
- If collarbone is fractured, support arm on injured side in a St John sling
- If dislocation of a joint is suspected, rest, elevate and apply ice to joint

Management

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Control any bleeding and cover any wounds.
3. Check for fractures
 - open, closed or complicated.
4. Ask patient to remain as still as possible.
5. Immobilise fracture:
 - use broad bandages (where possible) to prevent movement at joints above and below the fracture
 - support the limb, carefully passing bandages under the natural hollows of the body
 - place a padded splint along the injured limb
 - place padding between the splint and the natural contours of the body and secure firmly
 - for leg fracture, immobilise foot and ankle
 - check that bandages are not too tight (or too loose) every 15 minutes.
6. Watch for signs of loss of circulation to hands and feet
8. Ensure an ambulance has been called — triple zero (000).

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohn.org.au or freecall 1300 360 455