



## **Quick First Aid guide**

### **ProSafety NZ**

#### **Topic: Broken bones and spinal injuries**

It is hard to tell a dislocated bone from a broken bone. However, both are emergency situations, and the basic first aid steps are the same.

#### **Symptoms**

- A visibly out-of-place or misshapen limb or joint
  - Swelling, bruising, or bleeding
  - Intense pain
  - Numbness and tingling
  - Broken skin with bone protruding
  - Limited mobility or inability to move a limb
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- Keep the person still and calm.
  - Examine the person closely for other injuries.
  - Call for medical help
  - If the skin is broken, it should be treated immediately to prevent infection. Don't breathe on the wound or probe it. If possible, lightly rinse the wound to remove visible dirt or other contamination, but do not vigorously scrub or flush the wound. Cover with sterile dressings.
  - If needed, immobilize the broken bone with a splint or sling. Possible splints include a rolled up newspaper or strips of wood. Immobilize the area both above and below the injured bone.
  - Apply ice packs to reduce pain and swelling.
  - Take steps to prevent shock. Lay the person flat, elevate the feet about 30cms above the head, and cover the person with a coat or blanket. However, DO NOT move the person if a head, neck, or back injury is suspected.
  - Check the person's blood circulation. Press firmly over the skin beyond the fracture site. (For example, if the fracture is in the leg, press on the foot). It should first blanch white and then "pink up" in about two seconds. Other signs that circulation is inadequate include pale or blue skin, numbness or tingling, and loss of pulse. If circulation is poor and trained personnel are NOT quickly available, try to realign the limb into a normal resting position. This will reduce swelling, pain, and damage to the tissues from lack of blood.

#### **DO NOT**

- DO NOT move the person unless the broken bone is stable.
- DO NOT move a person with an injured hip, pelvis, or upper leg unless it is absolutely necessary. If you must move the person, pull the person to safety by his clothes (such as by the shoulders of a shirt, a belt, or pant-legs).

- DO NOT move a person who has a possible spine injury.
- DO NOT attempt to straighten a bone or change its position unless blood circulation appears hampered.
- DO NOT try to reposition a suspected spine injury.

DO NOT test a bone's ability to move.

*Disclaimer. ProSafety NZ has taken care in preparing the guide. However, care should be taken in diagnosing and applying first aid treatment. Where possible professional help should be called.  
C-2-2007*