

# Fractures

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## FIRST AID FACT SHEET

# How to treat broken bones and fractures

A fracture is a broken bone. It can be difficult to tell whether the injury is a fracture, dislocation, sprain or strain. If in doubt, always treat as a fracture.

## Types of Fractures

**Closed** - Bone is broken with skin intact.

**Open** - Broken bone protrudes through skin or there is a wound.

**Complicated** - Associated injury to a major nerve, blood vessel, or vital organ(s).

## What to do

Follow [DRSABCD St John Action Plan \(https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-action-plan\)](https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-action-plan)

Control any bleeding and cover any wounds.

Rest and reassure, ask the casualty to remain still.

Immobilise the fracture in most comfortable position:

DO NOT attempt to force a fracture back into place.

Use broad bandages (where possible) to immobilise the fracture.

Place a padded splint along the injured limb then bandage above and below the fracture site leaving a five (5) cm gap either side of the fracture to prevent movement.

DO NOT bandage over the fracture.

The casualty may be able to support the fracture themselves.

Check that bandages are not too tight or too loose and every fifteen (15) minutes and watch for signs of loss of circulation to hands or feet.

Seek medical aid or call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance if required.

## Caused by

Direct force - at site of impact.

Indirect forces e.g. fall on feet and break spinal bone.

## **Signs and symptoms**

Pain at or near the site of the injury.

Difficult or impossible normal movement.

Loss of function.

Deformity or abnormal mobility.

Tenderness and swelling.

Discolouration and bruising.

Broken bone penetrating skin and bleeding.