Lateral condyle humerus fracture with no or minimal displacement

Your child has broken (fractured) their arm at their elbow. Your child’s fracture is not displaced or is minimally displaced, meaning that the bone is broken, but the pieces are very close to the normal position. A backslab (half cast) and sling are required to allow the bones to heal properly.

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

The first 24-48 hours after injury

Your child’s arm, hand and fingers may swell in the first 24 -48 hours after injury. To decrease this swelling, your child should rest their arm up onto a pillow when sitting or lying down.

You should encourage your child to bend and straighten their fingers every hour while they are awake. You should check the temperature, colour and movement of their fingers about every 4 hours while they are awake.

You child will have pain in their elbow initially. Medication such as ibuprofen (e.g. Advil™) as needed following the directions on the bottle will help decrease their pain.

Signs of a problem

- Severe pain when moving their fingers
- Fingers that are blue or white
- Fingers that are cold (you can compare them to the fingers on their other hand)
- Fingers that cannot curl up or straighten out
- Numbness or pins and needles in their fingers
If your child has any of these signs, rest your child’s arm on a pillow while lying down for 30 minutes. If the problem does not get better, call your doctor, or go to the hospital.

**Follow-up appointments**

Your child will have a review by a doctor in the fracture clinic about 7-10 days after injury. New x-rays will be taken and checked to see if your child’s fracture has moved. If the fracture remains minimally displaced, the backslab will stay on for another 2 weeks.

Your child will return to the fracture clinic 3-4 weeks after the injury. The backslab will be removed and new x-rays will be taken. The doctor will check the x-rays to see if the fracture is healing well.

After removing the backslab, your child’s arm may be dry and itchy and look dirty. Use warm water and soap to gently wash the arm and cream to moisturize the skin.

When the backslab is off, your child can begin moving the elbow. At first, the elbow and wrist may be stiff. The movement will get better with time but this may take up to one year. Physiotherapy is not recommended for every child.

To decrease the risk of rebreaking their arm, your child should not participate in high-risk activities such as playing on monkey-bars, ice-skating, skateboarding and sports for 12 weeks after their injury.

You child will likely return to the fracture clinic 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months after the injury. The doctor will check your child’s arm and their x-rays to see if the fracture is healing well.

**Key Points**

- Your child needs a backslab (half cast) to help heal their broken arm.
- Your child will be in a backslab for at least 3 weeks.
- Your child will need to avoid high-risk activities for a total of 12 weeks after their injury.
- Your child's elbow may need a year to fully recover strength and movement.