



 Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Broken Arm Treatment

Self-Care at Home

- The most important aspect of first aid is to stabilize the arm. Do this by using a towel as a sling. Place it under the arm and then around the neck. An alternate approach to keep the arm from moving is to position a rolled and taped newspaper along the swollen area and to tape it in place.
- Apply ice to the injured area. This can help to decrease pain and swelling. Place ice in a bag and leave it on the arm for 20-30 minutes at a time. It may be helpful to place a towel around the ice bag or in between the bag and the skin to protect the skin from getting too cold. Never put ice directly on the skin.



Medical Treatment

The most important aspect of treating fractures is to determine which ones can be treated with outpatient care and which require admission to the hospital.

In most instances, the broken arm will be able to be treated in the emergency department.

- Most fractures will need to have a splint or partial cast applied to stabilize the broken bones. Some breaks especially in the upper arm and shoulder may only need to be immobilized in a sling.
- In addition to splinting the broken arm, the physician will prescribe medicines for pain control and ice to decrease swelling.
- Typically, situations that warrant admission to the hospital are these:
 - Bones that have gone through the skin or have lacerations over the broken area

- Fractures that are associated with nerve damage
- Fractures that are associated with blood vessel damage
- Complicated fractures that have multiple breaks, involve the joints, or are unable to be stabilized in the emergency department or doctor's office.
- Multiple fractures.

more information from eMedicineHealth

- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
- [Exams and Tests](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Prevention](#)
- [Outlook](#)

For more information, read the complete article, Broken Arm (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59382>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Ann Edmundson, MD on May 24, 2006
Last updated: May 24, 2006

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor.

© 2006 WebMD Inc. All rights reserved.