

## Activity Challenge: Make a Splint

*A splint is a piece of medical equipment used to keep an injured body part from moving and to protect it from any further damage. If you or a loved one is injured at home or during an activity, such as hiking, you can create a temporary splint from materials around you.*

### 1 To get started:

You will need something rigid to stabilize the fracture. Items you can use include:

- ▶ A rolled-up newspaper
- ▶ A heavy stick
- ▶ A board or plank
- ▶ A rolled-up towel

You'll also need something to fasten the homemade splint in place. Shoelaces, belts, ropes, and strips of cloth will work. Medical tape can also be used if you have it. Follow the directions on how to apply a splint to practice on a family member.

### 2 Place the splint:

Carefully place the homemade splint so that it rests on the joint above the injury and the joint below it. For example, if you're splinting a forearm, place the rigid support item under the forearm. Then, tie or tape it to the arm just below the wrist and above the elbow.

Avoid placing ties directly over the injured area. You should fasten the splint tightly enough to hold the body part still, but not so tightly that the ties will cut off the person's circulation.

After you've applied the splint and the injured body part is no longer able to move, call 911 or your local emergency services. You can also take your loved one to the nearest urgent care clinic or emergency room (ER).

### 3 Splinting the hand:

The hand is an especially difficult area to immobilize. Here are some tips for making your own hand splint.

- 1. Place an object in the palm of the hand.** Then place a wad of cloth in the palm of the injured person's hand. A washcloth, a ball of socks, or a tennis ball can work well. Ask the person to close their fingers loosely around the object.
- 2. Apply padding.** After the person's fingers are closed around the object, loosely place padding between their fingers. Next, use a large piece of cloth or gauze to wrap the whole hand from the fingertips to the wrist. The cloth should go across the hand, from the thumb to the pinkie.
- 3. Secure the padding.** Finally, secure the cloth with tape or ties. Make sure to leave the fingertips uncovered. This will allow you to check for signs of poor circulation. Remember, not too tight!
- 4. Seek medical help.** Once the hand splint is on, seek medical attention at an ER or urgent care center as soon as possible.

### 4 Reflect on the experience:

- ▶ What kind of situation would you use this skill in?
- ▶ What do you need to make sure to do after splinting someone?