Arm Restraints

Arm restraints are put on the arms of infants and young children following certain types of surgery. The restraints are worn to prevent the child from bending his elbows and touching the surgical repair. The restraints must be worn until the doctor tells you it is safe to remove them.

Caring for Your Child

- Be sure you have the correct size (infant or child).
- Put your child's shirt on first and put the arm restraints on over the shirt.
- The restraints should keep the elbows from bending.
- If the child's fingers turn cold, it means the restraints are too tight and you need to loosen or adjust them.
- If the restraints are too loose or tight, adjust them so they fit snugly.
- If the skin under the arms is red and the adjustment does not help, you may use a little cotton padding to keep the restraints from rubbing the skin when the child moves.
- Remove the arm restraints at bath time and 2 or 3 times during the day when you can closely supervise your child.
- While the restraints are off, move the child's arms around so they do not become stiff.
- When you bathe your child, look at the skin for reddened areas, especially on the arms, underarms, neck, chest and back. If the skin is chafed or red, apply a little baby lotion.

CAUTION: Never leave your child alone when the restraints are off. The surgical repair can be ruined quickly if your child's hands are free.
Care of the Arm Restraints

- Replace any broken or rough boards.
- When the restraints become soiled, remove the wooden boards. Place them in the pockets of a clean restraint exactly the way the restraint was fixed when you left the hospital.
- Wash the soiled restraint in mild soapy warm water. Rinse well to remove all the soap. Air dry to prevent shrinkage (dryer heat will shrink the material).

Activity

Play is very important to your child and he should be encouraged to play. Although your child's arm movements are limited because of his arm restraints, he can enjoy many activities. Here are a few suggestions that may help you think of things to do:

Sponge Painting
You will need a small piece of sponge, paper, thick water paint and a paint dish. Ask your child to dip the sponge in the paint dish and dab or rub it on the paper to make a picture.

Read Stories and Encourage Talking
Read stories to your child. Have him take part by pointing to and naming pictures, naming colors and repeating words.

Teach your child to name different parts of his body and to name familiar objects around the house.

Foot Play
You will need a piece of plastic or newspaper, a large pan, floating toys and water.

Place a large sheet of plastic on the floor or have your child sit on a chair or step and place his feet in a large pan of water. Place small floating objects in the pan and allow your child to push them with his feet.

Place a large sheet of paper on the floor. Then have your child sit on a chair and dip his feet into a pan filled with water paint. Have your child create various designs by moving his feet on the paper.

Music
Play records or tapes for your child and sing along with him.

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Other Play Activities

- Coloring with crayons
- Play dough
- Simple puzzles
- Musical toys
- Dolls and puppets
- Cloth books
- Finger painting
- Snap beads
- Blocks
- Busy board
- Bean bags
- Brush painting
- Trucks and cars
- Push and pull toys
- Helping with household chores
- Blackboard and chalk wagon rides

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call__________________.