



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

## Helping Hand™

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

# Elbow Immobilizers (Welcome Sleeves)

Elbow immobilizers (also known as welcome sleeves) are put on the arms of infants and young children following certain types of surgeries or procedures. The welcome sleeves are worn to prevent the child from bending their elbows and touching the surgical repair or important medical device. The welcome sleeves 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 of welcome sleeves (infant or child).
- Put your child's shirt on first and put the welcome sleeves on over the shirt.
- The welcome sleeves should keep the elbows from bending.
- If the child's fingers turn cold, it means the welcome sleeves are too tight and you need to loosen or adjust them.
- If the welcome sleeves 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 welcome sleeves from rubbing the skin when the child moves.
- Remove the welcome sleeves at bath time and 2 or 3 times during the day when you can closely supervise your child.
- While the welcome sleeves are off, move the child's arms around so they do not become stiff.



**Picture 1** Baby can still play.



**Picture 2** Pots and pans make fun toys to play with.

- 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 welcome sleeves are off. The surgical repair can be ruined quickly or the medical device removed if your child's hands are free.

## **Care of the welcome sleeves**

Soiled welcome sleeves may be washed in a washing machine and dried in a dryer. You may also wipe welcome sleeves clean and allow them to air dry.

## **Activity**

Play is very important to your child and they should be encouraged to play. Although your child's arm movements are limited because of the welcome sleeves, they 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 the child take part by pointing to and naming pictures, naming colors and repeating words.
- Teach your child to name different parts of their 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 their feet in a large pan of water. Place small floating objects in the pan and allow your child to push them with their feet.
- Place a large sheet of paper on the floor. Then have your child sit on a chair and dip their feet into a pan filled with water paint. Have your child create various designs by moving their feet on the paper.

### **Music**

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



Sponge painting



"There's your nose!"



Foot play



Music fun

### Other play activities

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

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call\_\_\_\_\_.