

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH CENTER**

**-HEALTHBERRY-**  
[www.uh.edu/admin/hc](http://www.uh.edu/admin/hc)

**JOINT DISLOCATIONS OR SUBLUXATIONS**

Dislocation is an injury to a joint so that adjoining bones no longer touch each other. Subluxation is a minor dislocation in which the joint surfaces still touch, but not in normal relation to each other. The major joints involved are the jaw, shoulder, knee and spine.

The chief causes are injuries which stretch or tear ligaments that surround a joint and hold the bones together. Occasionally, shallow or abnormally formed joint surfaces are to blame (congenital); and rheumatoid arthritis or other diseases of ligaments and tissue around a joint can be at fault.

The signs and symptoms are sudden joint pain, swelling after an injury and/or deformity. In general, the area is so painful that limited or absent mobility is the rule. Major risk factors are repeated injury to a joint, history of congenital hip dislocation or rheumatoid arthritis. The use of protective devices such as wrapped elastic bandages, tape wraps, knee or shoulder pads and special support stockings can be very useful.

Immediately after the injury, apply ice packs to the involved joint to prevent swelling. A medically untrained person should not attempt to manipulate the joint back into position. A splint or sling should be used to prevent movement while transporting the injured person to the doctor. Damage to nearby nerves or major blood vessels can occur. Diagnostic x-rays will be needed. At times, simple manipulation of the joint will reposition the bones, but surgery is sometimes needed. After manipulation or surgery, the joint is usually immobilized with a splint or cast to allow it to heal without further trauma. Recurring dislocation may require more extensive surgical reconstruction or even replacement of the joint.

Do not delay after sustaining such an injury. Come to the Health Center immediately!

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



**Healthfully yours,**

**Dr. Healthberry**

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For questions or comments you can;

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