

Neurovascular Checks

Nursing

The six Ps distal to a fracture, cast or vascular injury, and what changes mean.

Assess the limb distal to the injury and compare with the other side.

The six Ps

Pain — including on passive stretch

Pallor — colour compared with the other limb

Paraesthesia — tingling or numbness

Paralysis — loss of active movement

Pulselessness — a late and ominous sign

Poikilothermia — the limb takes room temperature

Practice points

Compare with the unaffected side every time

Record a time with every set of findings

Rising analgesia need is itself a finding

Do not rely on pulses alone to exclude it

Elevation above heart level is avoided

Escalate early rather than observe longer

Educational reference. Suspected compartment syndrome is a surgical emergency — escalate immediately under local protocol.