

**Patient
Information**

Elbow fracture

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with advice on caring for your injured elbow.

The most common type of bony injury to an elbow is known as a radial fracture.

What is a radial head or neck fracture?

The name of your injury depends on where you have damaged the radius, see images below.



A radial fracture is usually a stable injury and you do not need a plaster cast because the bones will not move. Instead you will be fitted with a collar and cuff sling. The sling will support your elbow in a comfortable position.

You can remove the sling as soon as you feel able.

For the first few days and until your arm is comfortable we recommend that you take regular pain relief such as paracetamol.

Reference No.

GHP11478_06_21

Department

**Emergency/
Trauma Services**

Review due

June 2024

Patient Information

It is important that you exercise your elbow, shoulder and wrist to stop the joints from becoming stiff and inflexible. You should exercise your shoulder, wrist and finger joints at least 4 times a day. This will help to prevent stiffness and enable you to return to your normal activities quickly.

For more detailed advice about exercises are available from the Therapy Department. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Symptoms may take 3 to 6 weeks to settle, but it can take several months for the elbow to feel normal again.

You may have slightly reduced movement of your elbow, especially when straightening it. This is unlikely to affect your normal function.

Radial fractures almost always heal well with time and use. No specific treatment is needed and therefore follow up appointments are not necessary.

Any X-rays taken are looked at by our radiologists. If there is any concern that there may be a more serious injury, you will be contacted.

Contact information

Should you have any worries or concerns following discharge from hospital, please contact:

Trauma Service

Tel: 0300 422 5269

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

Email: ghn-tr.glostrauma@nhs.net

Further information

Therapy Department

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 8527

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 3040

Website: www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/physiotherapy/how-can-i-see-physiotherapist/

Content reviewed: June 2021