

Fractured radius at the elbow

Information for patients

Outpatient Fracture Care Team: Shared care plan

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This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the Fracture Care Team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (bone specialist) and Fracture Care Extended Scope Physiotherapist.

You have sustained a fracture to one of the bones in your elbow (proximal radius).

Please see the picture below to understand where this injury is. This normally takes approximately six weeks to unite (heal). You may use the arm in the meantime; it is important to keep the elbow moving to prevent stiffness. You should, however, avoid any heavy lifting for the full six weeks. Take pain killers as prescribed. If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.



We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury. **If after three weeks** you are not close to achieving full movement in your elbow please contact us using the details listed above. We may arrange some physiotherapy to help you with your exercises.

If you are experiencing pain and symptoms anywhere else other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, please also get in touch using the telephone or email details at the top of this letter.

Please follow the management/rehabilitation plan shown below:

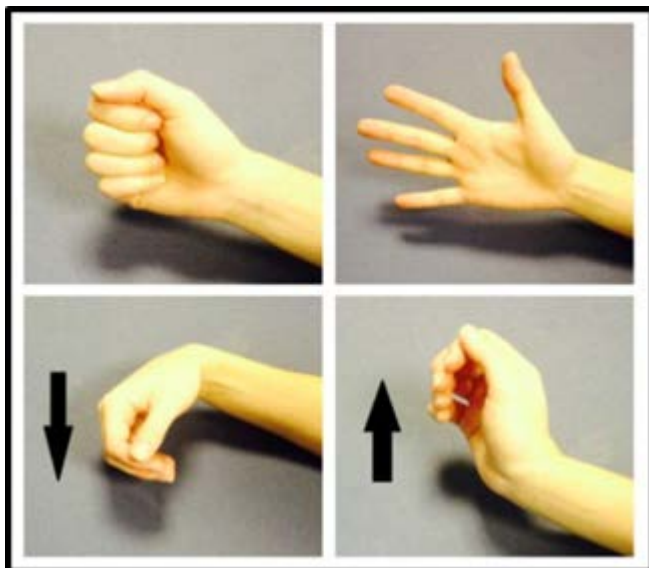
| Weeks since injury | Rehabilitation plan |
|--------------------|--|
| 0-2 | Wear sling for comfort only. Take your arm out of the sling and practise moving the elbow (see below). Do the exercise below every hour in the daytime. |
| 2-6 | Try not to use the sling. Try to do normal light activities with the arm. Avoid lifting more than the weight of a cup of tea for six weeks. Continue with the exercises. |
| 6-12 | The fracture should be united (healed) and you can do normal activity but be guided by any pain you experience. You should be able to carry out day-to-day activities although arduous tasks may cause discomfort. |

Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

Initial exercises to do four to five times a day:



Finger and wrist flexion and extension

Open and close the hand of your injured arm as shown 10-15 times; then move your wrist up and down 10-15 times.

After a few days, hold a soft ball or ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without it causing pain.

Hold for five seconds and repeat 10 times.



Elbow bend to straighten

Bend and straighten the injured elbow so you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.

Forearm rotations


Begin this exercise with your injured elbow at your side and bent. Slowly turn your palm up and down as far as you can go without it causing pain. You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch.

You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat both exercises 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.


Further information and advice can be obtained from:

NHS 111
NHS Choices online

 **111**
www.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone:  01622 224960 or  01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: December 2019
Database reference: RWF-TO-LEA-PAT-29

Review date: December 2022
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