Discharge advice for a proximal humerus fracture

Issued by the Orthopaedic Department
You have broken the top of your arm bone near your shoulder joint (proximal humerus). Most of these fractures are treated with a collar and cuff sling followed by physiotherapy. The eventual recovery with this treatment is usually very good.

**What will happen after I leave hospital?**
An orthopaedic consultant will review your x-rays tomorrow. You will get a telephone call following this (from a withheld number) to confirm your treatment and if further imaging, such as x-rays are needed.
If you have not received a telephone call from us within 24 hours please call the helpline number. These numbers are listed on the following page.

**Collar and cuff**
This will help provide pain relief and allow the fracture to heal in a suitable position.
We recommend that you exercise your hand and wrist.
Gradually start exercising by rotating your forearm in the sling. Be guided by the level of discomfort you feel.
We suggest you remove your sling twice daily and gently bend and straighten your elbow whilst supporting the weight of your arm. These movements will help reduce hand swelling and prevent stiffness of the joints in your upper limb.

**Painkillers**
We suggest paracetamol and ibuprofen, if you can take them, ask your pharmacist for advice.
The pain usually greatly improves after the first two weeks but can take longer.

**Sleeping**
You may be more comfortable sleeping propped up on several pillows in bed or in a reclining armchair in the early days after your injury.
Fracture clinic review
Arrangements will be made for you to attend a fracture clinic to be reviewed by an Orthopaedic Surgeon within two weeks. At this clinic decisions will be made regarding further imaging, such as x-rays, and follow up. In some cases an operation will be needed. If so the orthopaedic surgeon will discuss this with you at the clinic.

Osteoporosis screening
If you are post-menopausal or fell from a standing height or less we will discuss osteoporosis screening with you at clinic.

Physiotherapy
• This is usually started two weeks after your injury with gentle ‘pot-stirring’ exercises

When can I return to regular activities?
It may take up to six weeks before you can return to regular activities. This may be longer if your work involves strenuous use of your upper limb.

If you have any worries or concerns, please contact us on the helpline:
Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm 01670 529431
After hours and weekends, if you need urgent advice contact:
Wansbeck General Hospital 01670 529884
North Tyneside Hospital 0191 2932515
Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital 0191 6072100
**Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

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**Other sources of information**

**NHS 111**

**NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

**NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **01670 511098**

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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