Discharge advice for a radial head/neck (elbow) fracture

Issued by the Orthopaedic Department
You have a very small break at your elbow. This is in the radial head, or neck, one of the bones in your elbow. These fractures almost always heal well with time and use. No specific treatment is needed, therefore routine follow-up is not required.

**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**
A sling (collar and cuff) will hold your elbow in a comfortable position for a few days.

You should wean yourself off this as your pain settles and aim to remove the sling completely as soon as you feel able.

**Painkillers**
We suggest paracetamol and ibuprofen, if you can take them, ask your pharmacist for advice.

**When can I return to regular activity?**
Symptoms are usually minor, but may take up to 3-6 weeks to settle.

You may initially require regular painkillers, as it is important to keep gently moving the elbow.
You should gradually resume daily activities, as you are able to. This will prevent stiffness and ensure the quickest return to normal function.

You may be left with very minor residual bend in the elbow, which will not affect how you use your arm.

Forcible stretching is unnecessary, and is likely to cause pain and delay your recovery.

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

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)
www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Freephone: 0800 032 0202
Text: 01670 511098
Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111
www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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