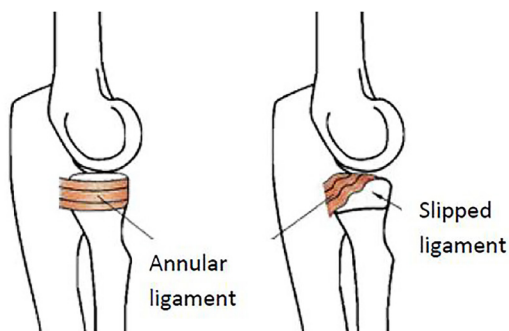


Pulled Elbow

Patient information

You have been given this information leaflet because your child has been diagnosed with a pulled elbow.

This is a very common injury in children under the age of 6 years old. This is not a dislocation but movement of one of the bones of the forearm (radial head) out of its ligament. This occurs because the bones are soft and not fully grown. The end of the bone is pulled out from its round ligament, the annular ligament.



This injury usually occurs after a child's arm is accidentally pulled. Sometimes no injury can be recalled.

Treating a Pulled Elbow

There is usually no need to x-ray the arm if the doctor is not concerned about a fall and a pulled elbow has been diagnosed. The bone can usually be placed back into the normal position easily, however this may be painful for a few seconds.

Normally your child will be able to use their arm quickly after this treatment, but it may take 30 minutes or longer if the pulled elbow has been present for a while. Sometimes it is not always possible to resolve the symptoms with this treatment. In this case your child may be placed in a sling for 1-2 days, to allow the arm to rest, and brought back for review.

Aftercare

Most children will forget about their arm injury within the first few days. A pulled elbow may occur again until the bones have fully grown, but this will not cause any long term problems.

Your child may need regular painkillers after their injury. Please follow the directions on the medication.

If your child does not go back to using their arm after 2 days you should seek further medical advice.

Treating Pain

If needed, painkiller options include the following:

Paracetamol is usually recommended for painful sprains or strains.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling. You can buy some types (eg, ibuprofen) at pharmacies, without a prescription either topically as a cream, or as tablets. You should check the medication advice leaflet to ensure you are safe to take these i.e some patients with asthma or stomach ulcers may not be able to.

If this does not help, you may need an additional stronger painkiller – such as codeine – you should discuss this with your pharmacist or GP.

Further Information

For further advice and information about your condition:

Please choose from the following:

- 'NHS Patient Choices' website: www.nhs.uk
- 'Making Lives Better' patient website: www.patient.info
- Telephone NHS 111
- Contact your General Practitioner

Contact details:

- The James Cook University Hospital: 01642 850850
Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW
 - The Friarage: 01609 779911
Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1JG
- Redcar Primary Care Hospital: 01642 511000
West Dyke Road, Redcar, TS10 4NW

Author: Emergency Department and Minor Injury Unit

The James Cook University Hospital, Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW.
Switchboard: 01642 850850

Version 1, Issue Date: October 2018, Revision Date: October 2020