

## Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your shoulder injury. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

## What is a radial head/neck fracture?

This is a fracture of one of the bones in your elbow.

## How long will this take to heal?

These fractures almost always heal well with time and use. Symptoms are usually minor but may take three to six weeks to settle. The fracture may take a few months to heal

## Will I need follow up?

Routine follow up is not necessary due to the nature of the fracture.

## Are there any complications?

There may be slightly reduced movement at the elbow, especially on straightening it, but this is unlikely to affect your function.



## How will this be managed?

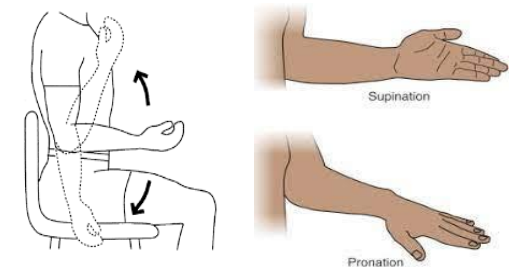
A polysling (arm support) will hold the elbow in a comfortable position for a few days. Please wean yourself off this as your pain settles and aim to remove the sling completely as soon as you feel able.



## What can I do to aid recovery?

- painkillers
- smoking cessation
- ice pack over the elbow
- avoid heavy lifting
- gently move the elbow (see exercises) as pain allows from one to two weeks of injury
- gradually resume daily activities

This will help prevent stiffness and ensure a good recovery. Forcible stretching is unnecessary and is likely to cause pain and delay in your recovery.



Forearm range of motion (ROM) exercises to regain movement.

Progress these exercises to strengthen the muscles by using a low weight dumbbell or water bottle.



It is important to do the exercises several times a day to minimize stiffness of the elbow.

### Smoking cessation

Stopping smoking will ensure optimal recovery from this injury therefore it is important to consider this advice. For more information and help, contact your GP or refer to NHS website:  
<http://smokefree.nhs.uk>.

### Contacting the team

If the pain gets worse or lasts more than six weeks or you are concerned about your elbow, please contact the virtual fracture clinic team on **01279 973362** Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

Out of hours please contact the on-call orthopaedic Resident Doctor via switchboard on 01279 444455.

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on [paht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:paht.pals@nhs.net) or 01279 827211.

Please contact the communications team on [paht.communications@nhs.net](mailto:paht.communications@nhs.net) or 01279 827926 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.



**The Princess Alexandra  
Hospital**  
NHS Trust

## Patient information

## Radial head/neck (elbow) fracture

## Orthopaedic department

**V2 | SCC| Orthopaedic Department | Date  
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