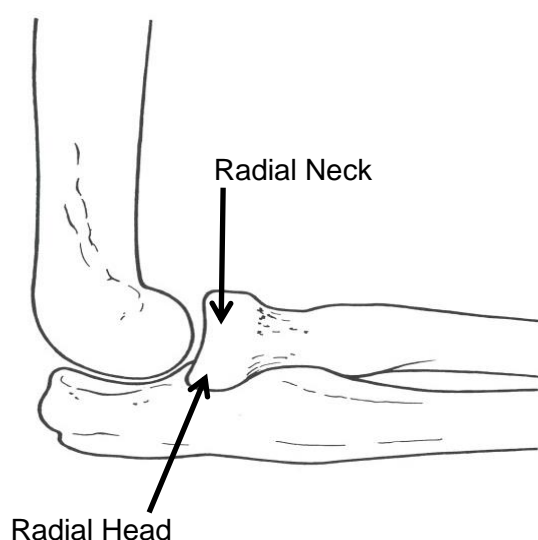


## Patient information

# Un-displaced Radial Head/Neck Fracture or Suspected Fracture

Therapies and Trauma and Orthopaedics



Radial Head Fracture



You have or are likely to have sustained a very small break in the radial head or neck which is one of the bones in your elbow.

Your fracture has occurred in a part of the bone which normally heals well without problems with the passage of time.

No specific treatment is required and therefore routine follow up is unnecessary but Physiotherapy may help if you are struggling to regain movement and function.

The pain, tenderness and swelling you are experiencing should gradually settle over a period of several weeks and it is safe to move your arm without causing further damage to the fracture.

A sling will provide comfort for a few days (**no more than five days**) and will help with pain relief. It does not aid healing. You should remove it for washing and dressing and wean yourself off it as your pain settles, aiming to remove it completely as soon as you feel able.

At first you may require regular painkillers as it is important to keep gently moving and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will prevent stiffness, reduce swelling and ensure the quickest return to normal function.

Ice packs applied to the elbow can also help to decrease pain and swelling in the first few days after your injury. A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a wet towel and placed over your elbow for ten to fifteen minutes every few hours can help reduce the pain and swelling.

**If you have poor feeling or altered sensation in your arm please do not use ice as it can burn the skin.**

It is important that you maintain full shoulder, wrist and hand movements.

The following exercises will help your elbow to recover and will be most effective if practiced regularly during the day. We would suggest doing them at least three to four times per day.

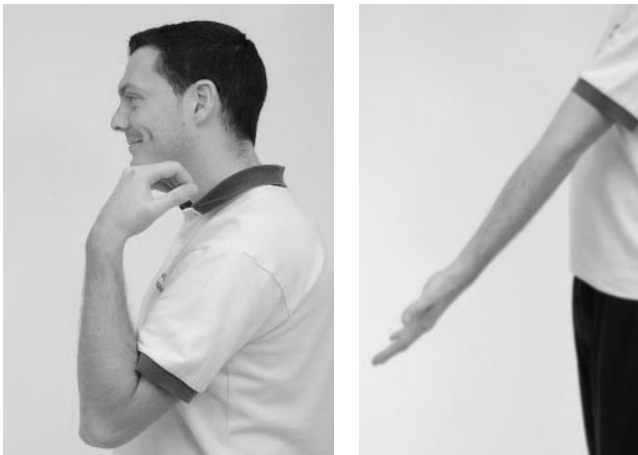
Repeat each exercise ten times until you have regained normal movement.

You should aim to increase movement each day. Forcible stretching is unnecessary and is likely to cause pain and delay your recovery.

### **1. Elbow flexion and extension**

In standing, sitting or lying on your back bend and straighten your elbow to the start of pain.

**In standing:**



**In lying:**



## 2. Forearm rotation

In sitting or standing with your elbow at your side and bent to a right angle turn your palm up and down to the start of pain.



As a result of this injury you may notice slightly reduced movement at your elbow especially on straightening it, but this is unlikely to affect your long-term function.

You may resume contact and impact sports from six weeks after your injury. We would advise that should be able to push weight through your hand and elbow without experiencing significant pain before returning to sport. You may experience mild pain and/or swelling when you first return to sport, this should settle quickly.

### Physiotherapy

The Emergency Department will have given you the information to access a Physiotherapy appointment. If this did not occur please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic on the telephone number below.

Smoking slows down healing and we would advise that you stop, at least for the duration of the healing process. Further advice can be found on the NHS website <http://smokefree.nhs.co.uk> or please contact your family doctor (GP).

If after three months you are still experiencing pain and/ or swelling which has prevented you from returning to normal activity please contact us on the number below.

### Driving

You need to be able to fully control your steering wheel and gears before you drive. This means that you must not drive in your sling.

### Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**You should contact your GP if you require a fit note.**

**Should you have any worries or concerns a message can be left on the Virtual Fracture Clinic Hotline and an appropriate person will contact you between 10am - 3pm, Monday to Friday. Any messages left over a weekend will be dealt with on Monday.**

**Telephone: 0151 706 2831**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2831**

**For any urgent worries or concerns please contact the Emergency Department on**

**Telephone: 0151 706 2050**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2050**

**Non urgent concerns can be discussed with your GP.**

**Royal Liverpool University Hospital Website**

**<http://www.rlbuht.nhs.uk>**

**Search Virtual Fracture Clinic**

**NHS 111 Service**

**Tel: 111**

**Author: Trauma and Orthopaedics Directorate**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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