

Radial head or neck fracture

This leaflet offers more information about radial head and radial neck fracture.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is a radial head or neck fracture and why have I got one?

Your radial bone runs from your wrist to your elbow.

You have a small break in the head or neck of this bone, at the elbow end, which is normally caused by falling on to outstretched hands.



What are the signs and symptoms?

You may feel pain and tenderness along the outside of your elbow.

You may not be able to move your elbow or forearm properly, especially if you try to turn your hand to face up or down (also called supination and pronation).

Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Sometimes an X-ray may be needed to confirm the diagnosis and guide your treatment.

What treatments are available?

Normally a few days of wearing a sling to keep your arm still, and then early movement of your elbow is all the treatment needed.

There is a small chance your fracture will need fixing.

What will happen if I do not get treatment?

You may not be able to move your elbow properly as it may stay stiff and painful.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

To help with stiffness and for you to get back to normal as quickly as possible, it is important to keep gently moving your elbow and start slowly doing daily activities again. You may need to take regular pain relief at first so you can do this comfortably. Do not stretch your arm with too much force, as this may be painful and delay your recovery.

After one to two weeks, when you are ready to, you can stop wearing the sling.

You will not need any more X-rays.

You may not be able to fully straighten your elbow for a few more weeks, but this should not stop you doing anything.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your radial head or radial neck fracture, please discuss them with your surgeon or nurse practitioner at your clinic appointment, or contact the fracture clinic on 020 8672 1255 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

