

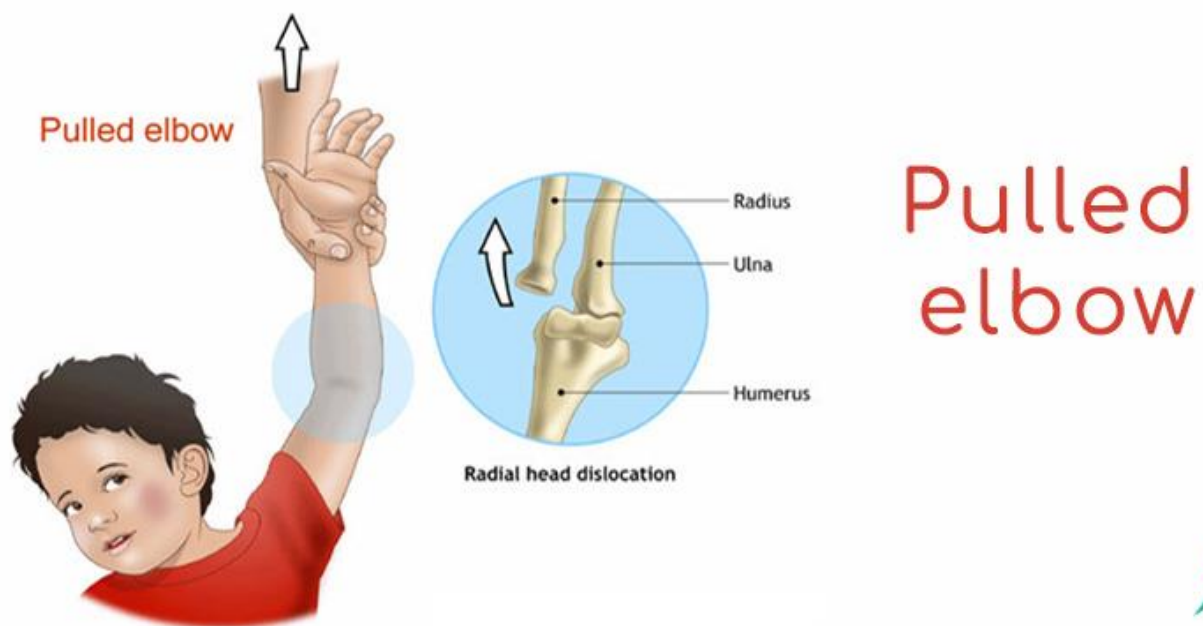
Pulled Elbow

This leaflet provides information about pulled elbow. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

What is a pulled elbow?

A pulled elbow (also referred to as nursemaid's elbow) is a common injury, especially in children up to six years old. It occurs when the head of the radius partially slips out of a ring shaped ligament at the elbow joint. This usually occurs when a child being held by the hand or lower arm / wrist receives a sudden pull on their arm, such as:

- Falling whilst someone has hold of their hand / arm.
- Pulling away whilst someone has hold of their hand / arm.
- Being lifted or swung round by arms.



What are the signs and symptoms?

- Initially the child may cry.
- Holding their elbow with the opposite hand.
- Reluctance to move the elbow, even despite pain relief being administered.
- Appearing pain free until trying to move the elbow.

Does my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Not usually as history and clinical examination should confirm diagnosis.

What treatments are available?

Once a diagnosis of pulled elbow is confirmed the nurse / doctor / practitioner will move your child's arm in a particular way to relocate the head of the radius into the correct position. Often a click or pop is felt and your child will either start moving the elbow normally again or will be moved back to the play area for 15 minutes to see if he / she starts using the arm normally again.

Sometimes it can take a couple of attempts, usually depending on how long ago the injury occurred. If not successfully reduced an x-ray may be performed to ensure there is no other injury or to confirm diagnosis. If there is no other injury on x-ray your child may be placed in a sling and discharged home with advice on regular analgesia to see if it self-reduces with rest. If your child is not using his / her arm normally within 48 hours you should re-attend the Children's Emergency Department for reassessment.

When symptoms have improved and your child is back to normal activities, it is important to avoid swinging games and pulling or lifting your child up by the hand. Alternatively lift him / her by the upper arms or armpits.

There are no long term complications from a pulled elbow and it is unlikely to occur again after the age of six as the radial head should then fit firmly in its ligament.

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 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (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

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: CYPED_PE_01 Published: February 2022 Review date: February 2024
