

# Radial Head or Neck Fracture in Children

This leaflet offers 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 does my child have one?

Your radial bone runs from your wrist to your elbow. Your child has a small break in the head or neck of this bone, at the elbow end, which is normally caused by falling onto outstretched hands.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Your child may feel pain and tenderness along the outside of their elbow and they may have swelling of the elbow joint.

Your child may not be able to move his/her elbow or forearm properly, especially if trying to turn their hand to face up or down (also called supination and pronation).



## Do s/he need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

An x-ray will be needed to confirm the diagnosis and to guide your child's treatment.

## What treatments are available?

A doctor will review your child's x-ray and discuss with both of you what needs to happen next in terms of your child's management.

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

There is a small chance your child's fracture will need fixing with surgery and an even smaller chance that this will need to be done urgently. If this is the case, the team will discuss all of this with you.

Whatever treatment is decided for your child, s/he will be followed up in fracture clinic in five to seven days via a telephone call in the first instance. (You will need to

book this appointment on your way out of A&E.) At this point a specialist will review the x-rays and how they are getting on and decide on whether any changes are needed to their current treatment.

## What will happen if I do not get treatment?

Your child may suffer from a prolonged elbow stiffness and pain with or without reduced movement, stopping them from doing normal daily activities.

## Is there anything I can do to help myself?

To help with stiffness and for your child to get back to normal as quickly as possible, it is important for them to keep gently moving their elbow and start slowly doing daily activities again. Your child may need to take regular pain relief at first, paracetamol and ibuprofen are generally best, given in the dosages on the packaging. These are safe and effective.

Avoid activities where your child may stretch their arm too much as this may be painful and delay recovery.

After one to two weeks, when they are ready to do so, your child can stop wearing the sling. S/he will not need any more x-rays.

Your child may not be able to fully straighten their elbow for a few more weeks but this should not stop them doing anything.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's radial head or radial neck fracture, please discuss them with their surgeon or nurse practitioner at their 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](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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.



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