

Elbow injury

You have been diagnosed and treated in the Emergency Department with an elbow injury. This leaflet gives advice on how to care for your elbow at home.

What is the treatment for elbow injuries?

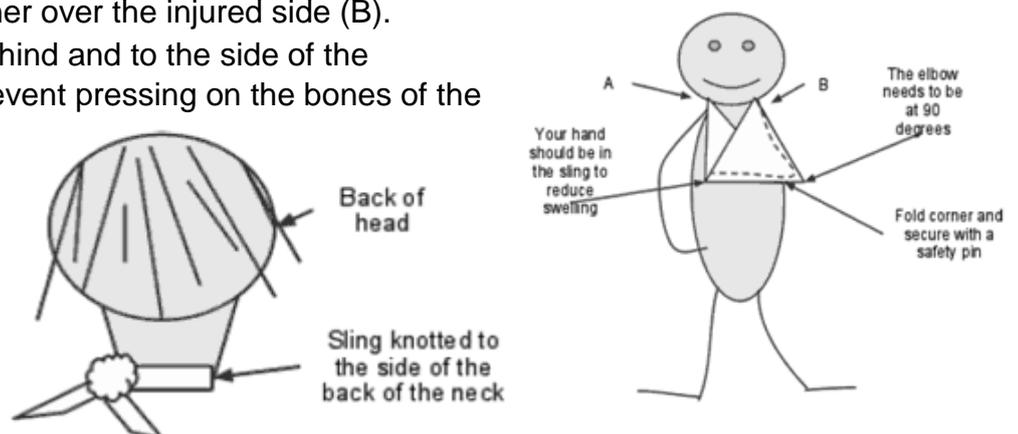
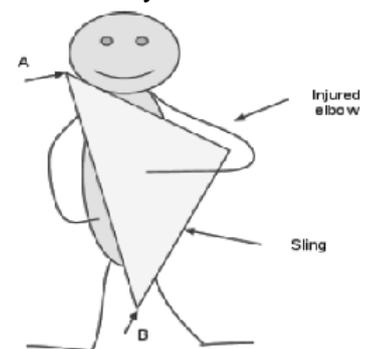
Elbow injuries often cause swelling, bruising, reduced movement and pain. The treatment of your injury involves reducing these symptoms. You may want to take some painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen. If you are already taking medicines from your doctor please consult a pharmacist prior to taking any over-the-counter medicines.

Advice during the first 24 hours

- To reduce pain and swelling, apply an ice pack, this can be crushed ice or frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied to the elbow for approx 10 minutes at a time every 2-3 hours.
- You need to rest your arm during this period and will probably have been given a broad arm sling, to support your arm. If you are sitting you can rest your arm on a pillow instead of using the sling. Keep your wrist, shoulder and hand mobile or they will become stiff.

To apply a broad arm sling

1. Hold the sling in front of the injured person with the longest side of the triangular sling down the front from head to toe and the point of the triangle pointing to the injured elbow.
2. Put the top corner of the triangle over the uninjured shoulder (A).
3. Bring the lower corner over the injured side (B).
4. Tie the two ends behind and to the side of the patient's neck to prevent pressing on the bones of the neck.



Advice after 24 hours

It is very important to start exercising the injured elbow to prevent stiffness. The exercises need to be performed slowly, it may cause discomfort but if really painful stop. They should be performed 6 to 8 times a day during the day.

- Sitting at a normal table put hand on a cloth that will slide on the table.
Keeping shoulder still, slide hand forward gradually straightening elbow, then slide back towards body resulting in bending your elbow.
Repeat up to 10 times.
- Rest your injured elbow in the palm of your opposite hand. Slowly bend and straighten your elbow as far as possible.
Repeat up to 10 times.
- Tuck your elbow in to your side. Turn your palm up and then palm down.
Repeat 10 times.

Ongoing treatment

Resume light activities and reduce the period of time you wear the sling.

Avoid heavy lifting or racquet sports until your elbow feels supple, strong and pain free.

This leaflet gives general advice only. It may take 6-8 weeks for you to regain full movement. Full straightening is often the slowest to return and may always remain restricted.

If you are concerned or if your symptoms fail to improve contact your GP.

Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

You can also pick up a copy of the Trust leaflet called 'Talk to us', which explains how you can raise concerns or give feedback on your experience at the hospital.

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – *How likely are you to recommend our service to family and friends if they needed similar care or treatment?* - by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm.

Further information

More information is available on the Trust website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Jane Macpherson, Emergency Nurse Practitioner

Emergency Department, December 2017. Review due: December 2019