

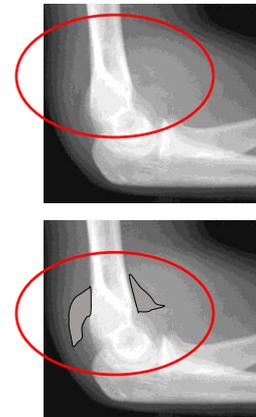
# Fat pad positive elbow injury in children: guidelines during Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions that you or your child may have about managing an elbow injury.

*Note to young people reading this leaflet: To make this leaflet easier to read we have addressed it to parents or carers; please excuse us for referring to you as 'your child'!*

## What is a 'fat pad positive' elbow injury?

Your child has sustained a 'hidden fracture' of their elbow. A fat pad sign is when the normal fat pads that sit around the bones in the elbow become visible (see x-ray, right). This is usually caused by a small crack (hidden break) to one of the elbow bones that often do not show up on x-ray.



## What is the treatment?

These injuries almost always heal well with time and no specific treatment is required. Your child's injured elbow will be held in a comfortable position using a 'collar and cuff' or sling. If they are extremely uncomfortable the doctors may consider an above-elbow cast, but 9 times out of 10 it is not required. They will need to wear the sling or cast for the next 7-14 days.

The team will show you how to remove this at home.

A member of the team will call you 2 weeks after the injury to check on your child's progress.

## Things to be aware of early on in the treatment

Your child may have slight pain or swelling in their elbow. This will settle within a few days. It may be helpful to ease your child's discomfort with simple painkillers such as paracetamol (calpol) or ibuprofen (nurofen). These should be used as directed on the packet or by your pharmacist. If your child's pain is not relieved despite these, or if the pain does not begin to improve after a week, then please seek medical advice.

### Seek immediate medical advice if:

- Your child is complaining of worsening pain, not controlled by simple painkillers or is unable to fully straighten their fingers because of pain.
- The plaster looks or feels tight.
- The fingers become very swollen, and/or an abnormal colour, or your child says they feel tingling in their fingers or increasing pain when moving them.

### Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this condition, please contact the Orthopaedic Clinic between 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday on 0118 322 8334 (except bank holidays).

More information about the Trust can be found on our website [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Nev Davies, Paediatric Orthopaedic Department, March 2020  
Review due: March 2022