



Elbow dislocation

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

What is an elbow dislocation?

This is a common injury, especially in young people undertaking sport. It usually happens from a fall onto an outstretched arm. The bones of the forearm (the radius and ulna) move out of place compared with the bone of the upper arm (the humerus) resulting in pain and deformity of the joint.

What is the treatment?

Your elbow will have been reduced (pulled back into place). This is usually done while you are conscious using strong drugs to make you sleepy. This makes the procedure as comfortable as possible for you. Occasionally, your elbow will be reduced using Entonox (gas and air).

Your arm will now be in a plaster back slab (the plaster doesn't go all the way around arm – this is to allow for swelling), and you will be given a sling to help support it. A further X-ray will be taken straight after the cast has been applied to check the position and look for any fractures (broken bones) that could not be seen on the initial x-ray.

Recovery

Your elbow will feel much more comfortable once it is back in position and in a cast, but it may still be sore. If so please take painkillers as provided by the Emergency Department or simple painkillers that can be obtained from the chemist or supermarket.

You will need a follow up appointment in the Fracture Clinic; this will be arranged before you leave. Please keep this appointment.

Please also see patient information leaflets called – 'Leaving hospital after sedation (adults)', 'Driving after injury', and 'Pain relief in adults'.

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.

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience, you can give feedback by completing the Friends & Family test by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/friends-and-family-test/ or using the link sent to you in an SMS text message.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Emergency Department

Reviewed: December 2025

Next review due: December 2027