

This is a follow-up letter to your recent consultation with the fracture care team, explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (bone specialist).

**You have fractured one of the bones in your elbow (proximal radius).**



**Healing:** This normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal.

**Pain:** Your elbow may be swollen. Take pain killers as required.  
(always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).

**Using your arm:** It is important to keep the elbow moving to prevent stiffness.  
You should avoid any lifting, pushing and pulling for the full 6 weeks.

**Follow up:** We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury.

**If after three weeks** you are not close to achieving full movement in your elbow, please contact us using the details listed above. If required, we will ask the physiotherapy team to help you with your exercises.

If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, or have any questions, please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.

**Or** if you are experiencing pain and symptoms anywhere else, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, please also get in touch using the telephone or e-mail details at the top of this letter.

**Please follow the management plan below.**

<b>Weeks since injury</b>	<b>Rehabilitation plan</b>
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Wear sling for comfort only.</li> <li>✓ Take your arm out of the sling and practise moving the elbow</li> <li>✓ Start the 'Stage 1' exercises within 72 hours of injury</li> <li>✓ Start the 'Stage 2' exercises after 72 hours of injury</li> </ul>
2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Try not to use the sling and do normal light activities with the arm.</li> <li>✗ Don't lift more than the weight of a cup of tea for six weeks.</li> <li>✓ Continue with the exercises until you have your full range of movement.</li> </ul>
6 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The fracture will be healed .</li> <li>✓ Resume normal, day-to-day, activities but be guided by any pain you get.</li> <li>✗ Heavy tasks may cause discomfort.</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<b>If you are still experiencing significant pain and stiffness, please contact us for a further consultation.</b>

**Advice for a new injury:**

**Cold packs:** A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

**Rest:** Try to rest your arm for the first 24 to 72 hours. However, it is important to maintain movement in your elbow. Gently move your elbow following the exercises shown. These should not cause too much pain. This will ensure your elbow does not become stiff and it will help the healing process.

## Smoking advice:

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure the best recovery from this injury.

If you would like help with stopping smoking, please contact a member of the Hospital Stop Smoking Team on 01384 456111 ext. 2783, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

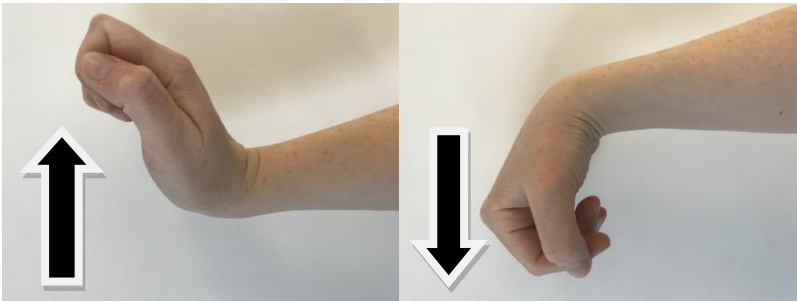
## Exercises:

### Stage 1 exercises: Start within first 72 hours of injury.

In the first 72 hours, it is important to keep your wrist and hand mobile as they may stiffen up whilst you are not using your arm as normal.

For each of these exercises, perform **10-20** repetitions, every **1-2** hours throughout the day within comfort levels, progressing the number of repetitions as tolerated.

#### 1. Active Wrist flexion and extension



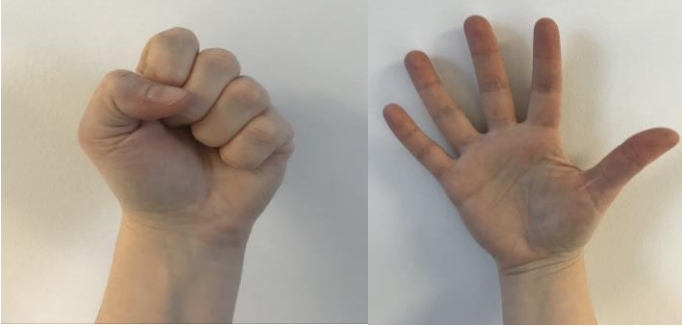
With the hand resting over the edge of a table or resting in mid air, move the wrist and hand forwards as far as comfortable then in the opposite direction, backwards as far as comfortable. Alternatively, you can do this exercise in your sling.

#### 2. Active Wrist radial and ulna deviation



Rest the palm on a flat surface then move to the wrist side to side, as though you are doing a wiping action. Alternatively, you can do this exercise in your sling.

#### 3. Active finger flexion and extension.



With your hand resting in mid air, bend your thumb and fingers to make a full fist then spread the fingers and thumb apart as wide as possible. Alternatively, you can do this exercise in your sling.

You can stop these exercises as soon as your function and use of the arm starts to resume.

### Stage 2 exercises: Start 72 hours after injury.

You will now also be ready to start weaning off the use of your sling as pain levels permit

For each of these exercises, perform **5-10** repetitions, every **1-2** hours throughout the day within comfort levels, progressing the number of repetitions as tolerated.

#### 4. Assisted elbow flexion and extension



Standing or sitting, Support your affected arm with your other hand, bend your elbow up to your face/shoulder apply a gentle over pressure as pain tolerate. Then fully straighten, apply a gentle over pressure as pain tolerates.

Do not force through pain.

#### 5. Assisted pronation and supination



Standing or sitting, Support your affected arm above your elbow. Keep your elbow tucked into your side. Clasp your hands together as shown. Turn your palm to face up to the ceiling and then down towards the floor.

Do not force through pain

### Is it normal to get pain when I exercise?

It is normal to get some discomfort/pain when you exercise and this may take anything up to a few months to settle completely. However, it should not be severe pain and any pain after exercising should be bearable. Your joint should not feel hot, inflamed or develop lots of swelling after exercising. If your pain following exercising does not settle down within 30 minutes of exercising you should consider:

- Doing smaller amounts of exercises
- Not pushing through high intensity pain
- Discussing your pain relief with your GP or pharmacist as required.
- If there has been an increase in swelling, use the ice and elevation advice

If you still find your pain severe or unmanageable or are concerned about lack of improvement please contact the fracture clinic.

### Finally...

Although the information in this leaflet is based on current knowledge and best practice in managing typical conditions, all individuals and injuries are different. This may mean your symptoms do not follow a normal and predictable course. If this is the case and you have any concerns please contact the Fracture Clinic.

You can find video's for this information sheet on the following link: Radial head # <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tix6LT1GbK>