

Pulled elbow in a child

Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

Your child has been diagnosed as having a pulled elbow. This leaflet includes information about what a pulled elbow is, how it is treated and what you need to do when you get home.

What is a pulled elbow?

This is common in young children.

It is not a dislocation but a movement of one of the bones in the elbow out of its ligament. Ligaments are tough tissues that support the joints and keep the bones in place. This usually happens when the child's arm is accidentally pulled. Sometimes you and your child cannot remember this injury happening.

An X-ray of the elbow may be needed to check if your child has a fracture (broken bone) but this will not diagnose a pulled elbow.

How can it be treated?

The practitioner can usually make the bone slip back into its ligament. This involves moving the elbow gently which can be painful for a few seconds.

Normally your child will be able to use the arm very quickly after the treatment. However, this may take 30 minutes or longer if the pulled elbow has been present for a while.

It is not always possible to solve the problem by performing this manoeuvre the first time. In these cases, the arm is usually rested in a sling and you will need to bring your child back to see us again in the next day or two.

Often, the problem gets better itself in this period of time. If not, we may need to make another attempt to move the elbow.

Will it happen again?

A pulled elbow may happen again until your child reaches the age of seven to eight years. At this age, the bone in the elbow has grown enough to stop moving out of its ligament. It can affect either elbow. A pulled elbow will not cause any long term problems.

You can help by trying to avoid pulling your child's arms.

If it does happen again, or if your child is complaining of a painful elbow or not using the arm, please go to your nearest Emergency Department.

Can I find out more?

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/accident-emergency/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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