The Royal Wolverhampton
NHS Trust

# Pulled Elbow – Child

Emergency Department

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

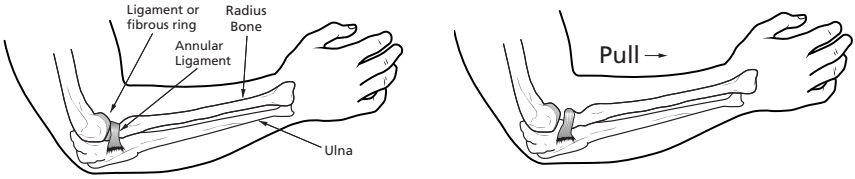
# Introduction

This leaflet is intended to help you understand what a 'pulled elbow' is and how it occurs.

# What is a pulled elbow?

A 'pulled elbow' is a common injury in young children. There are two bones in the forearm – the radius and the ulna. A 'pulled elbow' is when the radius bone moves slightly out of position and slips out of the ligaments (fibrous bands or ring) which hold the elbow in position.

This is not the same as a dislocation, when the bones are forced completely out of alignment causing damage to the ligaments.




It commonly occurs between the ages of 2 to 4 years, but can occur in any age up to 8 years. It usually happens when the child's arm has been pulled quickly or sometimes if the child has fallen.

# What are the symptoms of a 'pulled elbow'?

When a child has a 'pulled elbow' they tend to let their arm hang down by their side and they will not use it. There does not tend to be any bruising or swelling over the elbow.

# How can the elbow be put back into position?

The radius commonly goes back into position during our assessments of your child's elbow. If we feel that an extra movement is needed to get the radius back into position, we can do this quickly. It can be uncomfortable so we can give your child extra pain relief if they have not already had some before coming to the emergency department. Once we have done the movement for the elbow, we will check to make sure your child is moving their arm.

If the movement was more difficult to undertake or your child is still not moving the arm, we may consider doing an X-ray.

## How can I help to prevent this injury from happening again?

Your child should recover from their 'pulled elbow' without any complications. However, they are more likely to have further episodes of pulled elbow on that side as the fibrous ring would be looser than before. To avoid further episodes, please avoid pulling on your child's arm, for example, games where you swing your child by their arms. It is also helpful to pick them up from their armpits rather than their lower arms or wrists.

## When do I need to worry about my child's arm?

If your child is not using their arm correctly within 24 hours, please return to the emergency department

**If you need further advice regarding this problem, please contact NHS 111.**

**For other advice please consider which NHS service is most appropriate. This can include visiting your pharmacist, a minor injuries unit, your GP or a Walk in centre.**

## English

**If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.**

**If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.**

## Lithuanian

**Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.**

**Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.**

## Polish

**Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.**

**Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.**

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

**Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.**

**Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.**

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。

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