

Return to sport

Your child can return to full activity when the elbow is not painful and it can straighten out as far as the normal elbow.

Before returning to competitive sport, you may want to see a doctor or physiotherapist who knows about athletic and sport-related injuries. Most children are doing all their normal sports and play by three months after the injury.

Problems

If your child has sudden new pain, swelling or tingling in their injured area, that would be unusual. If this happens, please come back to the children's emergency department at any time.

If you have any other problems, for example, the pain does not go away after taking simple pain medicines, please come back to the emergency department.

To ensure your child's injury is being treated correctly, their x-rays are looked at by specialist x-ray doctors. If we have any concerns we will contact you directly, and may ask you to come back to hospital.

How to find us

For information on directions, public transport and parking visit www.kch.nhs.uk and look at 'Getting to King's'.

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite

you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is in the main hospital foyer at PRUH and they would be happy to advise you.

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital,
Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND
Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net.

Corporate Comms: 2530
PL1128.1 January 2023

Urgent & Planned Care
Review date January 2026

Minor injuries of the elbow: The 'fat pad' sign

Information for patients and parents/carers – Princess Royal University Hospital

This leaflet explains what to do if you/your child has been diagnosed with a minor injury of the elbow. It explains the symptoms, what you can do and what you can expect.

Introduction

Your child has been seen and assessed by one of the doctors or nurse practitioners who believes it is safe for you to take your child home. This leaflet has been written by the doctors and nurses working in the children's emergency department to act as a guide and is to remind you of some of the things you need to know in order to look after your child in the future. We hope this will be helpful to you. Please read it carefully.

What is the 'fat pad' sign?

The 'fat pad' sign is something we see on the X-rays of children who have hurt their elbows. It means there is swelling in the elbow joint.

The swelling in the joint **may** have been caused by a tiny fracture in the elbow that we can't see. A fracture is the same as a cracked or broken bone.

Hearing us say your child **may** have a 'fracture' sounds serious. The good news is, if there is a little fracture, it is a minor injury - the bones are stable and held in the right place, no procedures are needed and your child will make a full recovery.

What to expect

- Your child may have some pain but it should not be severe. It should improve over the next 4-5 days, but some children can experience mild pain for a couple of weeks.

You can use paracetamol or ibuprofen to help your child feel more comfortable. Please always give medication as indicated on the label.

Treatment

These injuries heal well with time. Your child's arm will either be put into a 'collar and cuff' foam sling or a fabric sling, or it may be placed into a 'soft cast'.

Treatment: Sling

They will normally need to wear the sling for about seven days. Their arm can be gently taken out of the sling for showering or bathing. Do NOT let your child wear the sling while sleeping.

Help your child to move the other joints in the arm - the wrist, the fingers and the shoulder - even if the elbow is kept still. Once the pain has improved, the elbow can come out of the sling every couple of hours and your child can be encouraged to straighten it gently, little by little each time.

Virtual Fracture Clinic

Your child's injury will heal up all on its own. To ensure safety, we ask our team in the 'Virtual Fracture Clinic' to review all cases nonetheless. Details of your child's injury and the x-ray images will be reviewed by our orthopaedic (bone specialist) and physiotherapy teams. Normally they will not need to call you. You can simply continue to follow the Emergency Department (ED) instructions and advice. If your child's injury does not improve as outlined by the ED instructions, please contact the virtual fracture clinic on the details below.

Occasionally, the team may need to contact you by phone to discuss your child's injury further. The doctors in ED will let you know if you should expect a follow up phone call. This call will be a

withheld number and be between **9am – 4pm**, Monday – Friday.

PLEASE ENSURE WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT CONTACT DETAILS BEFORE YOU GO HOME.

If you have been told to expect a call and have not been contacted within three working days of your child's visit, please phone **01689 865136** between 9am – 4pm, Monday - Friday.
Email: kch-tr.pruhfracturecareteam@nhs.net

Soft Cast removal

After 3 weeks of wearing the 'Soft Cast' it can be removed by the parent/carer.

Find the end of the cast and peel it away - the cast should un-roll but you might need to pull quite hard! Soaking the cast in water it will not make removing it easier. You might need a good pair of scissors for the last layer. Please be extremely careful when doing this.

If you are experiencing problems with the removal and you would like us to help remove it, please return to the ED.

Application Date of the Soft Cast:

Removal Date (in 3 weeks time):