

## **Children's Emergency Department (CHED)**

### **Pulled Elbow Information Leaflet**

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child is fit to go home.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's injury and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

#### **What is the problem?**

Our examination has shown that your child has a 'pulled elbow'. A pulled elbow is a common minor injury generally affecting children under the age of 5 years when one end of the bones in the arm partially slips out of place at the elbow joint. This usually occurs when a child being held by the hand or lower arm / wrist receives a sudden pull on their arm, such as:

- Falling whilst someone has hold of their hand / arm.
- Pulling away whilst someone has hold of their hand / arm.
- Being lifted or swung round by their arms.

#### **What are the signs and symptoms of a pulled elbow?**

- Initially the child may cry.
- Holding their elbow with the opposite hand.
- Reluctance to move the elbow, even despite pain relief being administered.
- Appearing pain free until trying to move the elbow.

#### **Does my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?**

Not usually as history and clinical examination should confirm diagnosis.

#### **What treatments are available?**

Once a diagnosis of pulled elbow is confirmed the nurse or doctor will move your child's arm in a particular way to replace the head of the radius into the correct position.

Often a click or pop is felt, we wait to see if they start using the arm normally again.

Sometimes fixing a pulled elbow can take a couple of attempts, usually depending on how long ago the injury occurred.

If the bone does not go back into the correct place an x-ray may be performed to ensure there is no other injury or to confirm diagnosis.

If there is no other injury on x-ray your child may be placed in a sling and discharged home with advice on regular analgesia (pain relief) to see if it goes back into place on its own with time.

### **What can I do if my child is not moving their arm again before discharge home?**

If your child is not using their arm normally within 48 hours, you should re-attend the Children's Emergency Department for reassessment.

### **What can I do to prevent this happening again in the future?**

When symptoms have improved and your child is back to normal activities, it is important to avoid swinging games and pulling or lifting your child up by the hand. Alternatively lift them by the upper arms or armpits.

There are no long-term complications from a pulled elbow, and it is unlikely to occur again after the age of six as the bone should then fit firmly in its ligament.

### **Where can I get help?**

- **Call 111 or visit the NHS 111 website** If you feel that you can manage your child's illness, but you want advice about something (your local pharmacist may also be able to help)
- If you are unsure about whether your child needs to be seen or needs medical treatment.

### **Your GP or the NHS walk in centre**

- If you have been advised to go there by 111.
- If you feel that your child needs a medical assessment, but it is not an emergency.

### **Go to your nearest Emergency Department or phone 999**

- If your child has the significant features above.
- If your instinct is that your child is dangerously unwell, especially if they have had paracetamol and ibuprofen.
- If you are advised to do so by 111 or your GP

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or scan QR code:

