

# Pulled elbow

Information for parents and carers

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Your child has presented to the Emergency Department with a pulled elbow. This is a very common injury seen in our department, usually in children under school age.

## **What is it?**

A pulled elbow occurs when one of the bones of the forearm (the radius) slides out of the ligament holding it in place at the elbow. This injury occurs when the arm is pulled, as can happen when the child's hand is being held and they try to pull away, or if the child is being swung by the arms in play. Sometimes a "click" can be heard at the time of the injury.

When this occurs, the child will naturally be distressed, and will hold the arm by their side.

## **Treatment**

Your child will be seen by a doctor or a nurse practitioner who will attempt to move the arm back into its normal position. Full movement of the arm should be restored. This can be confirmed by observing your child in the play area for a few minutes.

In some cases, the child may still be reluctant to move the arm afterwards, in which case a "collar and cuff" (type of sling) will be applied to give the arm support for 1-2 days, followed by a review at our clinic.

## **Recurrence**

This condition can recur; however, it is much less common as children reach school age.

To reduce the chances of this happening again, try to avoid any movement that causes a pulling action on your child's arm, such as those previously mentioned in this leaflet.

If you have any worries or concerns about this, please telephone the Emergency Department on 0131 312 0007/8

