Radial head fracture

You have or are likely to have sustained a fracture (break) to the radial head, a bone within the elbow. This is a very common injury. The good news is that these fractures heal well, and do not require a cast as they are stable. The only treatment is pain killers and a sling for comfort.

- It usually takes 6 weeks for the fracture to heal, but the stiffness in the elbow joint usually takes longer to recover, and physiotherapy is useful to help improve this.
- It will not produce further damage if you continue to use your elbow for normal activities. It is likely to be sore in the early stages but this should improve.
- Your elbow can quite often swell up and ice and elevation helps.
- If you are not improving after 6-8 weeks, please attend the Minor Injury Unit or the Emergency Department for a check-up.

**Exercises**

We recommend starting to exercise the elbow as soon as you can in order to regain normal movement. The sling is a temporary measure and you should try to wean from this over the next couple of weeks.

The following exercises are useful to speed recovery and we recommend you perform these at least 3-4 times per day. We suggest that the exercises are held for 5 seconds and repeated 10 times each.

**Elbow flexion and extension:**

- Bend and straighten your elbow fully. Apply some added gentle pressure with your other hand to help the arm to bend fully and also to help the elbow straighten fully. Quite often initially you will struggle to fully straighten the elbow. This can take several weeks to months to fully recover.

continued over...
**Supination/Pronation:**

- Whilst sitting down, rest your forearm on a table with your elbows tucked in at your sides. With your palm facing down, turn your palms up to face upwards.

Please re-attend the Minor Injury Unit if you have any ongoing concerns regarding your Radial Head Fracture.

Please contact your GP or NHS111 for any queries or concerns.