

Orthopaedic Department  
York teaching hospital

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team, explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Physiotherapist.

**You have sustained a dislocation to your elbow with an associated fracture.**

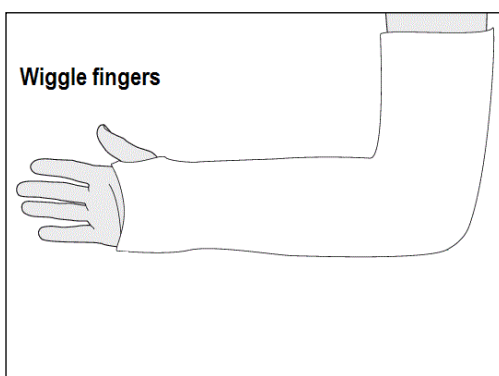
**Healing:** This injury normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal.

**Pain and numbness:** Take pain killers as prescribed.

It is important that you make sure you can always wiggle your fingers and that you have full sensation to your fingers. If at any time you lose sensation or movement of your fingers you should immediately return to A&E to have the plaster checked.

**Using your arm:** You have been placed in a temporary backslab (plaster) in A&E and given a sling. You should try to do the gentle exercises described below.

**Follow up:** You will see an Upper Limb Specialist 7-10 days after your injury. They will remove the temporary plaster and examine your elbow. You may be fitted in another cast or brace and you may need further x-rays. The specialist will talk through the next stage of your rehabilitation. If you have not received this appointment within one week of receipt of this letter please contact the booking hub directly on Tel: .



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.

If you experience pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, please get in touch using the telephone or e-mail details at the top of this letter.

**York Virtual Fracture Clinic Contact details:**

**Phone:** 01904 726575

**Scarborough Trauma Assessment and Treatment Unit (TATU):**

**Phone:** 01723 342021 / 07385 463781

**Email:** virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk

Please follow the management plan below.

**What to expect:**

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keep the arm elevated in the sling or on pillows if more comfortable.</li> <li>✓ Do the circulation exercises show below</li> <li>✓ You will see an Upper Limb Specialist</li> </ul>
2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Specialist will give you advice for the next phase of your rehabilitation at your follow up appointment.</li> </ul>

**Advice for a new injury:**

**Cold packs:** A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

**Rest:** Try to rest your arm for the first 24-72 hours. However, it is important to maintain movement. Gently move your arm following the exercises shown. These should not cause too much pain. This will ensure your arm does not become stiff and it will help the healing process.

**Smoking advice:**

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

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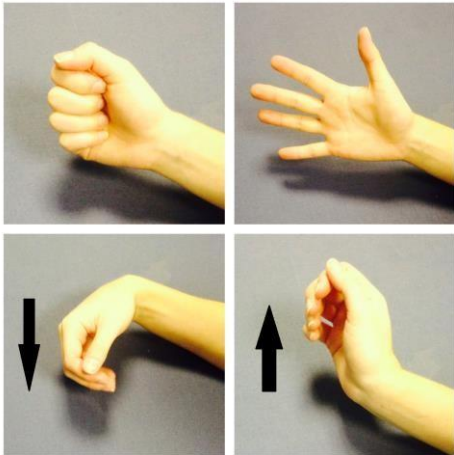
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## Exercises

### Initial Exercises to be done 5-6 times a day



#### Finger and wrist flexion and extension

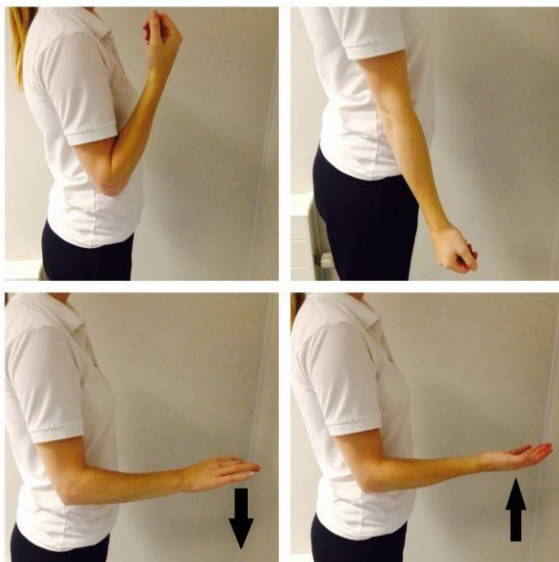
Begin this exercise by opening and closing your hand as shown, then moving your wrist up and down approximately 10-15 times

Progress to holding a soft ball / ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.

Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times if there is no increase in pain.

### After your consultant appointment

Ask your consultant if you can start these exercises. They can be done 5-6 times a day if the consultant thinks you're ready.



#### Elbow Bend to Straighten

Bend and straighten your elbow as far as you can without pain. You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.

#### Forearm Rotations

Begin this exercise with your elbow at your side and bent. Slowly turn your palm up and down as far as you can go without pain. You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.

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