How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

Fractures of the Radial Head or Radial Neck in Children

Information leaflet for parents and guardians

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice & Liaison Service on 01296 316042

Author: Trauma & Orthopaedic Upper Limb Group
Issue date: March 2017
Review date: March 2019
Leaflet code: TO-001
Version: 2.0

Looking after the splint/plaster

Your child will need to be in the sling (and plaster if they have one) for 3 to 7 days. Taking good care of the sling and plaster will prevent skin problems and discomfort.

Do:
• Keep the plaster / sling clean and dry at all times.
• Watch for signs of damage – call the plaster room if you’re worried
• Keep the sling on at all times except for when washing and at night.

Don’t:
• Push anything between the plaster and the skin; it can cause serious injury to the skin.
• Get the plaster wet, it is not waterproof.
• Modify the sling; this may stop it working properly.

After 3 to 7 days the sling/plaster can be removed.

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Radial head / neck Fractures
Your child has been diagnosed with a fracture of a bone in the forearm called the radius. The break is near the elbow, in the part of the bone known as the head or the neck.

This leaflet is designed to tell you what a ‘Radial Head’ or ‘Radial Neck’ Fracture is, how it is treated, and how long it will take to get better. It also tells you what to do if you’re concerned or have any questions.

Which bone is broken?
The radius bone runs between the wrist, closest to the base of the thumb, and the elbow. Towards the elbow, the radius changes shape, these parts are referred to as the ‘radial head’ and the ‘radial neck’. Your child has broken their radius bone at either the radial head or the radial neck. These fractures are very similar, and the treatment is the same. The x-ray shows that the broken pieces are in a good position and should heal well.

How did my child get this fracture?
Fractures of the radial head or the radial neck usually occur during a heavy fall onto an outstretched hand, or by falling directly onto that part of the elbow.

It is usually painful to touch over the fracture site, and the child may not want to move their elbow. There may be some swelling or bruising.

What treatment will my child have?
These fractures are very stable. Usually, a sling is all that is needed to rest the elbow and allow it to heal. Occasionally, the elbow is placed in a plaster cast to protect it, but this is not necessary and makes no difference to healing. The elbow can get stiff if not moved.

Will my child be in pain?
It's normal for your child to feel a little sore after this injury. Give them pain relief for children, available from your local pharmacy.

How long will it take to heal?
Radial Head / Neck fractures usually heal in 4-5 weeks but the elbow should be gently moved from 3 – 7 days onwards.

Will my child need an operation?
No, not usually. Very rarely some fractures may move position or cause stiffness and require an operation. If needed we will talk to you about this in detail.

Can I send my child to school? Yes, but they should not take part in PE lessons for six weeks.

What can I expect once the sling / plaster is removed?
It may be stiff at first, this will settle. Rub the skin with simple moisturiser to treat any flaky or dry skin. Your child should then use the arm as normal, but avoiding contact sports/PE for 3 weeks.

Where to go for more help / information
For questions regarding the splint or plaster:
Please call our nearest plaster room to you (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm).
Stoke Mandeville – 01296 315743
Wycombe – 01494 425452
If you are concerned that your child’s fracture isn’t healing properly:
Please call the plaster room and they will arrange for a further appointment to be sent out to you.

In an emergency attend your nearest A&E Department, but for other concerns contact your child’s GP.