

Treatment of elbow fractures depends on the type of break

By ELLIE URSINO PA-C

The elbow is a joint that is composed of three bones. These bones are held together by a system of ligaments, muscles, nerves and blood vessels. When an elbow is injured many of these structures are stretched, torn, broken or damaged.

The elbow is made up of the humerus, which is the bone of the upper arm. The bones that make up the forearm are called the radius, which is on the thumb side, and the ulna, which is on the pinky finger side.

There are major ligaments that stabilize the bones on each side. Large muscle groups that are responsible for arm movement attach at the elbow. The artery that supplies blood to the forearm and hand travels right through the joint. There are nerves that innervate the forearm and hand that are found here as well.

When a person falls on an outstretched hand the wrist and elbow take the brunt of the force. When the fall occurs with the forearm turned in, this mechanism is notorious for causing a radius bone fracture at the head of the bone which is

located at the elbow joint. Swelling of the elbow joint occurs as well as pain.

Commonly, a person has severe pain when rotating the hand up towards the sky. This movement rotates the head of the radius over the ulna.

With any fracture, often it will show up on an x-ray. However, in the case of a radial head fracture, sometimes the fracture does not show up. This can be due to the nature of the fracture as it may not be completely through the bone; the bone may not be displaced in any way or, if the person cannot fully maneuver the elbow and arm during x-rays, the proper view cannot be taken.

There are others signs seen on an x-ray that can help determine the possibility that a radial head fracture has occurred.

There are degrees of radial head fractures. Type I are nondisplaced or compressed fractures that usually have no movement and are difficult to read on an x-ray.

Type II are fractures that are more visible on x-ray and may have a mild degree of separation away

from the primary bone.

Type III are fractures occur in many different pieces and are displaced. These fractures involve the entire radial head.

Treatment for each fracture type is different. A person with a Type I fracture is usually placed only in a sling for three days and is then encouraged to start performing range of motion exercises. This is key to successful healing and a quick return to normal function.

Type II fractures require a splint and a sling and, in most cases, after three to seven days range of motion exercises are started.

Type III fractures require surgical intervention. Very rarely are these fractures actually casted as early return to motion helps facilitate faster healing and less long term disability.

If a fall has occurred and there is any persistent pain with movement, as well as swelling at the elbow, an x-ray is needed to evaluate for a fracture of the radial head. Ask your health care provider any questions you might have.

What does the future hold?

If you are honest this tells the truth. Write your answers on a piece of paper.

1. Write the name of a person of the opposite sex.
2. Which is your favorite color out of red, black, blue, green, yellow?
3. Your first initial?
4. Your month of birth?
5. Which color do you like more, black or white?
6. Name of a person of the same sex as yours.
7. Your favorite number?
8. Do you like a lake or the ocean more?

Answers:

1. You are completely in love with this person.
2. If you choose:
Red - You are alert and your life is full of love. Black - you are conservative and aggressive. Green - your soul is relaxed and you are laid back. Blue - you are spontaneous and love kisses and affection from the ones you love. Yellow - you are a very happy person and give good advice to those who are down.
3. If your initial is:
A-K You have a lot of love to give in friendships in your life.
L-R You try to enjoy your life

to the maximum and your love life is soon to blossom.

S-Z You like to help others and your future love life looks very good.

4. If you were born in: Jan-Mar: The year will go very well for you and you will discover that you fall in love with someone totally unexpected.

April-June: You will have a strong love relationship that will last long and the memories will last forever.

July-Sep: You will have a great year and will experience a major life-changing experience for the good.

Oct-Dec: Your love life will not be too great, but eventually you will find your soul mate.

5. If you chose... Black: Your life will take on a different direction, it will be the best thing for you, and you will be glad for the change.

White: You will have a friend who completely confides in you and would do anything for you, but you may not realize it.

6. This person is your best friend.

7. This is how many close friends you have in your lifetime.

8. If you chose:
Lake - You are loyal to your friends and your lover and are very reserved.

Ocean - You are spontaneous and like to please people.

And the winners are...

DARWIN AWARDS FOR 2003

For those not familiar with the Darwin awards, they are awarded annually for the most extreme act of (usually terminal) stupidity.

First Place

When his 38-caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, California, would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

And now, the honorable mentions:

The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat cutting machine and, after a little hopping around, submitted a claim to his insurance company.

The company, suspecting negligence, sent out one of its men to have a look for himself. He tried the machine out and lost a finger. The chef's claim was approved.

A man who shoveled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car during a blizzard in Chicago returned with his vehicle to find a woman had taken the space. Understandably, he shot her.

After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting from Harare to Beltway had escaped. Not wanting to admit his incompetence, the driver went to a nearby bus stop and offered everyone waiting there a free ride.

He then delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling the staff that the patients were very excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies.

The deception wasn't discovered for three days.

An American teenager was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he received the injuries, the lad told

police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.

A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided.

The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer? \$15.

(If someone points a gun at you and gives you money, was a crime committed?)

As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher.

Within minutes, the police apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store. The thief was then taken out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID, to which he replied, "Yes, officer, that's her. That's the lady I stole the purse from."

The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan, at 5 a.m., flashed a gun, and demanded cash.

The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion

rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

Kentucky: Two men tried to pull the front off a cash machine by running a chain from the machine to the bumper of their pickup truck. Instead of pulling the front panel off the machine, though, they pulled the bumper off their truck.

Scared, they left the scene and drove home.

With the chain still attached to the machine.

With their bumper still attached to the chain.

With their vehicle's license plate still attached to the bumper.

They were quickly arrested.

When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for.

Police arrived at the scene to find a very sick man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesman said that the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline and plugged his siphon hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake.

The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.

— Courtesy of an e-mailing friend

Letter to the Editor

Appreciates toys program

Dear Editor,
I would like to thank all the Big Timber residents for the years of support with the Toys for Tots program. For several years now this program has helped me and my fam-

ily have a wonderful Christmas. I can't express how thankful I am to you all. I would also like to thank Tana at the Public Welfare for all of her help, too. She has been a tremendous help to me.

Anonymous

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