

Patient Information Sheet - Humeral Shaft Fracture

What do I need to know?

What has happened?

You have broken (fractured) your humerus. The type of injury you have suffered is painful but almost always heals without the need for surgery. It can be treated with a neoprene brace (see link to video overleaf).

What does the X-ray look like?



What happens next?

We will call you to offer you an appointment at our fracture clinic in around 2 weeks.

What should I expect during recovery?

Weeks 1 and 2

- The arm will be painful but it should be tolerable while wearing your brace with the support of a 'collar and cuff' sling
- Your brace is mainly for your comfort and can be safely adjusted and tightened as your swelling goes down. You can also remove it for a short while to allow cleaning if it gets wet or soiled, and for exercises (see below). See the video on how to do this via the QR code overleaf
- If you are experiencing weakness and numbness in the wrist and hand this is likely to get better over the next few months

Weeks 2 – 8

- The pain and bruising should begin to improve
- You may begin **EXERCISE 1** moving your arm back and forward and in small circles while it hangs freely

Weeks 9 – 12

- You can now take off the brace for increasing periods of the day, and leave it off completely when that is comfortable
- The arm may feel stiff and this is expected
- Progress through **EXERCISES 2-6**. Repeat x10 times each, and x3 per day

Useful phone numbers

ERI: 0131 5361000

SJH: 01506 523000

Waiting list office: 0131 2423437

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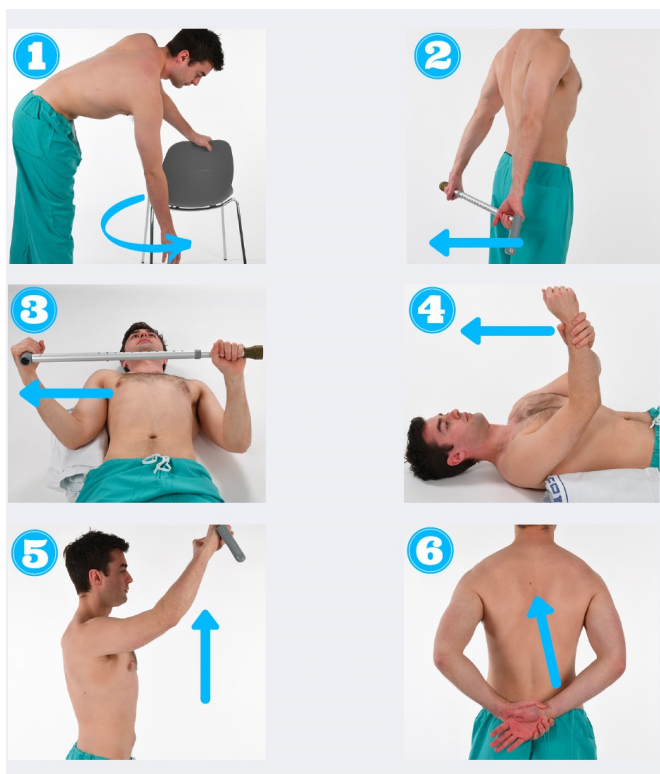
What if my humerus does not heal ?

In rare cases the humerus will not heal. If this is the case, you will notice ongoing pain in your arm beyond 3 months. You may have difficulty lifting anything heavy with that arm and may experience ongoing clicking at the fracture site. If this happens, contact details overleaf can be used to seek further help and guidance.

Top Tips

- Keep your elbow, wrist, fingers/thumb moving as much as you can
- **Stop or cut down on smoking** while the bone is healing (smoking has been proven to slow healing and increase the risk of 'non-union' [when the bone doesn't heal])

Key Exercises



Contact Details

Please get in touch via our advice email traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk if you have any queries regarding your arm.

If you do not receive a reply from this email after 3 working days please use the helpline in hours (8am-5pm): 0131 242 3410

Urgent Issues

Please call the Minor Injuries Unit helpline on 0131 242 3942 (out of hours) for any urgent issues, for example:

- There is a sudden, severe, constant increase in the pain
- You have progressive worsening numbness or weakness in your hand/wrist

Further Information

Access to a demonstration video on our YouTube channel 'Edinburgh Trauma and Orthopaedics'



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