Elbow Injury

Minor fractures, sprains, and bruises of the elbow will all cause swelling and pain. X-rays often show swelling around the joint but may not show a fracture line on x-rays taken right after the injury. The treatment for all these types of injuries is to reduce swelling and pain and to rest the joint until movement is painless. Repeat exam and x-rays several weeks after an elbow injury may show a minor fracture not seen on the initial exam.

Most of the time a sling is needed for the first days or weeks after the injury. Apply ice packs to the elbow for 20-30 minutes every 2 hours for the next few days. Keep your elbow elevated above the level of your heart as much as possible until the pain and swelling are better. An elastic wrap or splint may also be used to reduce movement in addition to a sling. Call your caregiver for follow-up care within one week. Keeping the elbow immobilized for too long can hurt recovery.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your pain increases, or if you develop a numb, cold, or pale forearm or hand.
- You are not improving.
- You have any other questions or concerns regarding your injury.

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