Elbow Effusion

You have an elbow injury with an effusion. This means there is blood or other fluid in the elbow joint. **Both fractures and sprains of the elbow cab cause an effusion with swelling and pain**. X-rays often show this swelling around the joint, but they may not show a fracture. The treatment for elbow sprains and minor fractures is to reduce swelling and pain. It rests the joint until movement is painless. Repeating the x-ray study in 1-2 weeks may show a minor fracture of the radius bone that was not visible on the initial x-rays.

Most of the time a splint or sling is used for the first days or week after the injury. Apply ice packs to the elbow for 20-30 minutes every 2 hours for the next 2-3 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 may also be used to reduce swelling. Call your caregiver for follow-up care within one week.

The major issue with this condition is loss of elbow motion. In general, your caregiver will start you on motion exercises and may have you follow-up with a physical or hand therapist.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a numb, cold, or pale forearm or hand.

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