Contusion Elbow, Bruised Elbow

Contusions are areas of tenderness and swelling in the soft tissues. They are the result of damage and bleeding in the injured area. Minor injuries will give you a painless bruise, but more severe contusions may stay painful and swollen for a few weeks. You have a deep bruise (*contusion*) of your elbow.

SYMPTOMS

A hematoma may form in large contusions. A hematoma is a collection of blood in the deep tissues. Hematomas are usually reabsorbed by the body naturally. Sometimes they need to be drained.

TREATMENT

Only a sling or splint may be needed for a brief period of time or as directed by your caregiver.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Rest the injured elbow until the pain and swelling are better.
- Elevate the injury to reduce swelling.
- Compression bandages also help reduce swelling and motion.
- If you have a splint held on with an elastic wrap or a cast, watch your hand or fingers. If they become numb or cold and blue, loosen the wrap and reapply more loosely. See your caregiver if there is no relief.
- You may use ice on your elbow for 20 minutes, 4 times per day, for the first 2 to 3 days.
- Use your elbow as directed.
- See your caregiver as directed. It is very important to keep all follow-up referrals and appointments in order to avoid any long-term problems with your elbow including chronic pain or inability to move the elbow normally.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You show signs of infection (increased redness, swelling, or pain).
- Swelling or increased pain in your elbow is not relieved with medications.
- You have pain or inability to move your fingers or wrist.
- You begin to lose feeling in your hand or fingers, or you develop swelling of the hand and fingers.
- You get a cold or blue hand or fingers on the injured side.
- If your elbow remains sore, your caregiver may want to X-ray it again. A hairline fracture may not show up on the first X-rays and may only be seen on X-rays 10 days to 2 weeks later. A specialist (*radiologist*) may examine your X-rays at a later time. In order to get results from the X-rays, make sure you know how and when you are to get that information. It is your responsibility to get results of any tests you may have had.
- **Make sure you have a follow up exam with your caregiver.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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