
DR BOB JANG

Orthopaedic Surgeon

Patient Name _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

RADIAL HEAD FRACTURES

Introduction

Thank you for choosing Dr Jang for your healthcare needs. This patient information sheet aims to provide you with important details regarding radial head fractures, including their causes, symptoms, diagnosis treatment options and the recovery process. Please read this information carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have during your consultation with Dr Jang.



What is a Radial Head Fracture?

A radial head fracture is a type of injury that occurs when the elbow joint experiences a forceful impact, resulting in a break in the radial head bone. The radial head is located at the top of the radius bone in the forearm, near the elbow joint. Fractures can vary in severity, ranging from small cracks to complete breaks or associated with a dislocation of the elbow (see Terrible Triad Elbow Injuries information sheet).

Causes

Radial head fractures are commonly caused by the following factors:

- Direct impact to the elbow, such as during a sports-related injury or accident
- Falling onto an outstretched hand
- Twisting or wrenching motions of the forearm

Symptoms

Symptoms of a radial head fracture may include:

- Pain and tenderness around the elbow joint
- Swelling and bruising
- Limited range of motion and stiffness in the affected arm
- Difficulty in bending or straightening the elbow

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- A popping or cracking sensation at the time of injury
- Weakness or numbness in the hand or fingers

Diagnosis

To diagnose a radial head fracture, Dr Jang may perform the following:

- Physical examination: Assessing the range of motion, tenderness, and swelling.
- X-ray: Imaging tests to visualise the fracture and determine its severity.
- MRI or CT scan: In some cases, additional imaging may be required to evaluate the extent of the injury.

Treatment Options

Treatment for radial head fractures depends on the severity of the fracture. The options may include:

- 1. Non-Surgical Treatment:**
- Immobilisation: Wearing a sling, splint or cast to keep the elbow stable and allow the fracture to heal.
 - Medications: Prescribing pain relievers or anti-inflammatory drugs to manage pain and reduce swelling.
 - Physical Therapy: Engaging in exercises to restore range of motion and strengthen the arm muscles.

- 2. Surgical Treatment:**
- Open Reduction and Internal Fixation: In severe cases, surgery may be necessary to realign the fractured bone and secure it with screws, wires, or plates. You may require repair of the ligaments around your elbow joint at the same time. In cases where the fractured bone is severe (highly comminuted) a repair of the bones is not possible and a radial head replacement may be required.



Recovery and Rehabilitation: The recovery period for a radial head fracture varies depending on the severity of the injury and the chosen treatment. Here are some general guidelines:

- Immobilisation: If you are wearing a cast or splint, it is important to follow your physician's instructions regarding duration and care.
- Physical Therapy: Your physician may recommend physical therapy sessions to help restore strength, flexibility, and range of motion in your arm.
- Follow-Up Appointments: Attend all scheduled appointments to monitor your progress and ensure proper healing.

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Precautions and Self-Care: During your recovery, it is essential to follow these self-care measures:

- Avoid activities or movements that strain the injured arm.
- Apply ice packs to reduce swelling and pain.
- Take prescribed medications as directed by your physician.
- Do not remove cast or splint without medical supervision.
- Report any unusual symptoms or concerns to your physician promptly.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, concerns, or need to schedule an appointment, please contact Dr Jang at the following:

- Phone: 02 8078 6621, 02 9525 2055
- Email: admin@drbobjang.com.au or reception@orthocentre.com.au
- Address: Caringbah/Bankstown/Strathfield.

Disclaimer: This patient information sheet is for educational purposes only and does not replace the advice and guidance of a qualified healthcare professional. Individual cases may vary, and treatment options may differ based on specific circumstances. Always consult your physician for accurate diagnosis and personalised treatment plans. Dr Jang is committed to providing exceptional care and support throughout your recovery journey. We wish you a speedy recovery and improved health.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Bob Jang

Orthopaedic Surgeon.

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