

# ELBOW SOFT TISSUE INJURY

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS



Lakeridge  
Health

### WHAT IS AN ELBOW SOFT TISSUE INJURY?

Soft tissue injury usually refers to a ligament sprain but sometimes could mean injury to a surrounding muscle or tendon of your elbow.

### HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO RECOVER?

The pain, tenderness and swelling should gradually decrease over a period of 3-6 weeks. A sling may be provided to you to support your arm in a comfortable position. This sling is meant to provide comfort only and should only be worn for a few days unless advised otherwise. You can remove it when resting, exercising and bathing.

### HOW TO PUT ON A SLING

1. Place your forearm in the material pocket, making sure that your elbow rests at the back of the pocket (elbow should rest at a 90 degree angle).
2. Using your non-injured arm, place the neck strap around the back of your neck, looping it through the ring on the material pocket near the top of your wrist, pulling the strap back towards your chest and attaching it to the Velcro. The neck strap should be tight enough so that your elbow rests at a 90 degree angle.
3. Loop the back strap around your back, through the ring on the bottom of the material pocket near your pinky finger, attaching it to the Velcro once looped through the ring.

### OPTIMAL RECOVERY PLAN

TIME SINCE INJURY

0-24  
HOURS

- Rest your arm in the sling for comfort. Please see instructions below.
- Apply ice to the injured area for 10-15 minutes, every 3-4 hours. Allow skin temperature to return to normal before reapplication of ice. Protect your skin by wrapping an ice pack or frozen peas in a damp towel to ensure the ice is never in direct contact with your skin.
- Follow pain relief advice given by the Doctor you saw in the hospital, or consult consult your Pharmacist or Family Physician.

1-10  
DAYS

- Stop using the sling as you feel comfortable.
- Start the 'elbow range of motion exercises' as described on the next page within your pain limits.

10 DAYS  
TO 3  
WEEKS

- By now you should be returning to your normal level of activities. You might still feel some discomfort with higher level activities such as carrying heavy groceries.
- If you experience a significant increase in pain and/or swelling then reduce your activity levels and gradually increase the level of activity over a longer period of time.

STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



FINAL



# HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM

Early movement of your elbow is important to help reduce stiffness. You should follow the exercises below while staying within your pain limits. The number of times you need to perform each exercise is included as a guide only. Forcible stretching is unnecessary, will likely cause pain, and may delay your recovery. If you experience a significant amount of pain while doing a certain exercise then you should reduce the number of times you do the exercise and gradually increase the amount during your recovery.

## UPPER EXTREMITY RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES

Repeat each exercise 10 times, 3 times a day.

1. Bend and straighten your elbow.



2. Keep your elbow by your side and turn the palm of your hand up then down. You can gently assist with your other hand if needed.



3. Open and close your fist.



For further advice and recommendations on exercises, please consult a Physiotherapist in your community. If you need a referral for Physiotherapy, please ask your Family Physician.

### Return to Sport

You should be able use the arm in normal day-to-day activities without pain before you consider returning to sport. It is recommended that you see a Physiotherapist in your community prior to returning to any sport.

### Return to Driving

You should be able to perform a full emergency stop confidently and pain-free before you consider returning to driving.