

Pulled elbow/ nursemaid's elbow

A common injury among small children is a pulled elbow, also known as nursemaid's elbow. It is caused by the radius bone becoming partially dislocated.

It is often caused by a sudden pull on a child's lower arm or wrist, for example if an adult is holding the child's hand and the child falls over. It can also happen when getting dressed/undressed. It is most common for children under 5 years old.

Some children can end up getting a pulled elbow several times, but the tendency to do so usually goes away by four to five years old.

Symptoms

It can be hard for adults to understand exactly what has happened/is wrong. Small children can't always explain what the problem is and just react by avoiding using the affected arm. They will sometimes point to their elbow or wrist if asked about where it hurts, and become upset if you try to touch/move their arm.

Treatment

A doctor or nurse can reposition the bone by bending your child's elbow a little, pushing on the radius bone and rotating the wrist. This usually repositions the radius to the correct spot and a 'click' will be felt. This procedure is painful, but it is a short lived pain.

Most children will start using the affected arm immediately afterwards or after a few minutes.

When should I seek care?

You can contact your *vårdcentral* (GP clinic), if you think your child's elbow is dislocated. If your child has a lot of pain and doesn't want to use their arm you can seek care at the emergency department.

Children's emergency department

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