



 Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Elbow Dislocation Treatment

Self-Care at Home

An elbow dislocation is a serious injury that needs medical care. At home, put ice on the elbow. This will help with the pain and will reduce some of the swelling. But the most important thing to do is to see a doctor.

It is best that this injury undergo evaluation by a doctor, but, at home, you can also check for a few signs that will show if the artery in the arm and the nerves are intact.

- To check for the artery, feel below your thumb at the base of your wrist. You should be able to feel your pulse. Press on the tips of your fingers. They should blanch (turn white) and then return to a normal pink color within 3 seconds. If either of these tests is abnormal, seek medical care immediately.
- Three nerves run by the elbow. Each nerve has portions that help with strength and feeling. First check for strength by bending your wrist up as if you were saying "Stop" (radial nerve function), then spread your fingers apart (ulnar nerve function), then try to touch your thumb to your little finger (median nerve function). If you have trouble with any of these tests, go to the doctor immediately.
- Check for feeling by touching all over your hand and arm. If any feeling of numbness results, see a doctor immediately.

Medical Treatment

The doctor will reduce (put back in place) your elbow by pulling down on your wrist and levering your elbow back into place. This is very painful, so powerful medications for pain may be given before reduction.

After your elbow is back in place, the doctor will get X-rays and then put you in a splint that will keep your elbow bent. The splint will make an "L" around the back of your elbow. It will be made of plaster or fiberglass. Its purpose is to prevent movement of your arm at the elbow. Usually, your arm will be placed in a sling to help you hold up your splint.

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- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
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- [Prevention](#)
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For more information, read the complete article, Elbow Dislocation (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59220>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

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