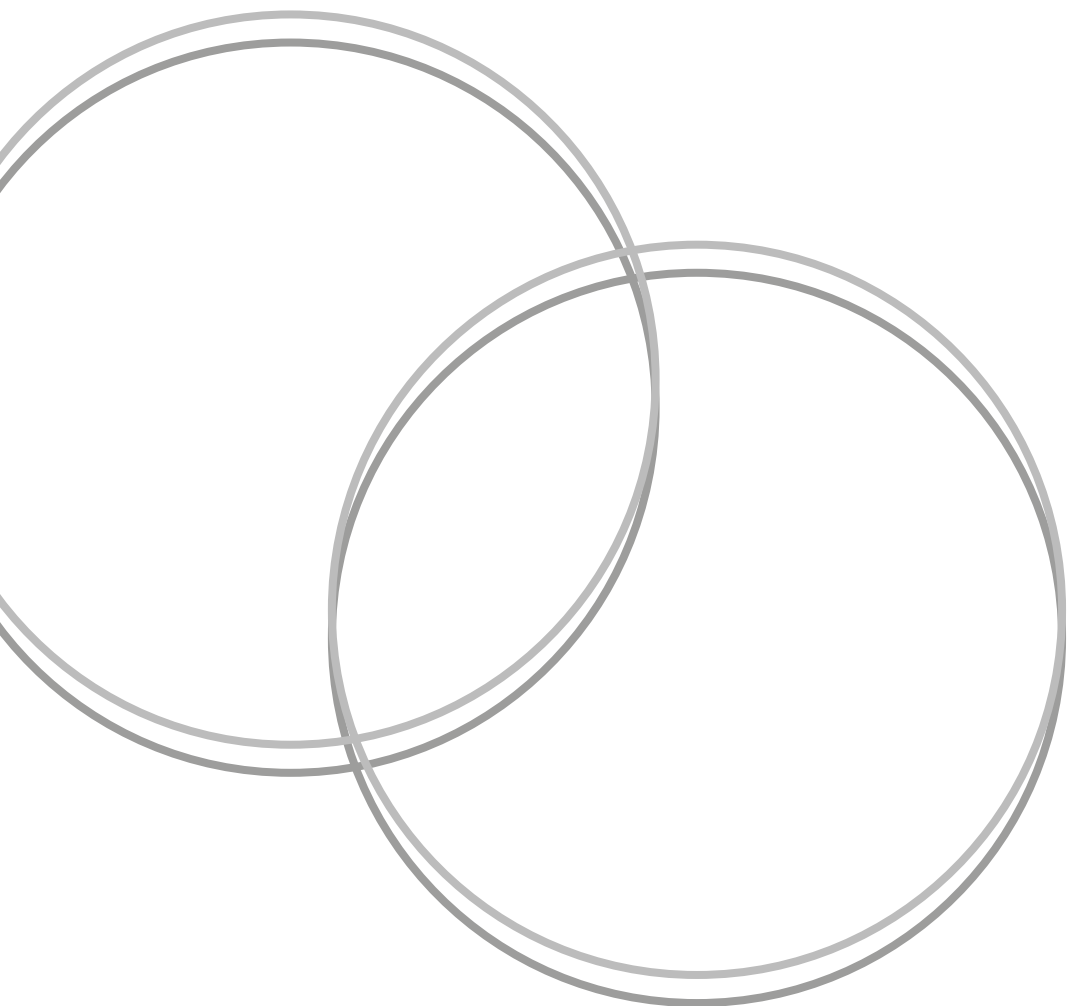




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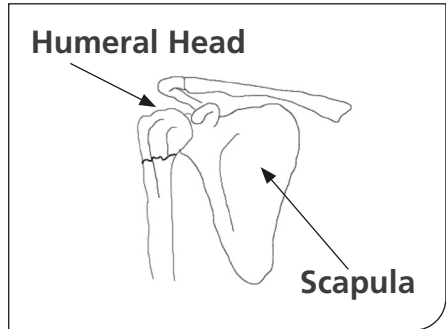
Humeral Head Fracture

Information for patients



What is a humeral head fracture?

Your shoulder is a ball and socket joint made up of the upper arm bone (humerus) and shoulder blade (scapula). Your injury is a fracture (break) to the upper part of the humeral bone. These fractures are common when you fall onto your arm.



Management of your injury

You will have had an X-ray of your shoulder that showed a fracture(break) of the ball of your humerus (or just below it).

You will be given a foam sling that loops around your wrist (called a collar and cuff) to wear, with your hand raised high on the opposite side of your chest. Having your arm in this position will support the bone, reduce your pain and allow your fracture to heal. It also stops your hand and fingers from becoming too swollen.

An appointment will be made for you to be reviewed in the trauma clinic after 1 week. At this appointment X-rays will be taken again to check the position of the fracture.

The fracture normally takes 6 to 2 weeks to heal.

After the first 2 days, expect a lot of swelling and bruising to the upper arm from the fracture. The bruising and swelling may go down as far as your elbow due to gravity.

Pain relief

Take regular painkillers, to help you move more easily and gently exercise your injured limb. Paracetamol is ideal. If paracetamol does not help, you may need a stronger painkiller, such as codeine. Codeine is only available on prescription; however, you can buy a combination of paracetamol with codeine over the counter of any pharmacy. Please speak to the pharmacist for extra advice and tell the pharmacist if you are taking other medications.

Please read and follow the dosage instructions on the packet carefully. If you require a stronger pain relief, please contact your own GP for a prescription.

Rest

Try to avoid moving your shoulder for the first 2 weeks after your injury to allow healing to take place.

In the first 2 weeks, wearing the sling under a t-shirt may provide further support.

Cooling

You can apply ice to the swelling on your shoulder for up to 20 minutes every two hours, for the first 24 to 48 hours. A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel is ideal. Do not apply ice directly to your skin, as this may cause a cold burn.

Dressing

When dressing put the injured arm in first and when removing clothes taken the injured arm out last.

Exercises

For the first 2 weeks after your injury it is important not to try and move your shoulder to allow it to start healing.

You **MUST** regularly move your neck, elbow, wrist and fingers to stop them becoming swollen and stiff.

When you are seen in the trauma clinic at your follow up appointment, the trauma team will talk to you about starting to move your shoulder and refer you to physiotherapy.

Stopping smoking

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

Useful telephone numbers

New Patient (Fracture) Clinic at:

John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm

Saturday and Sunday, 9.00am to 11.00am

Telephone: **01865 220 217**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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