

Lightning Learning: Radial Head Fracture Pathway

STOP!

Radial head fractures account for **1.5-4% of all fractures**.

85% occur in 20-60 age range.

More frequent in women.

Usually the result from FOOSH (with elbow in extension) when the radial head impacts the capitellum.

Undisplaced radial head fractures have a **good outcome in 85-95% patients** who are managed conservatively in a collar and cuff for 2-3 days.

LOOK

The patient may present with swelling, but typically they will have difficulty extending and supinating the elbow.

Look for **posterior fat pad +/- anterior sail sign** (see fig 1).

Fat pads are signs of an elbow effusion and should be treated as an undisplaced occult fracture.



LEARN

Local patient protocol @ UHL:

1. Complete a radial head fracture pathway
2. Give patient a Patient Information Leaflet

Local guidance:



Radial Head Fractures In Adults Initial Management including Referral to Virtual Fracture Clinic UHL Guideline
→ bit.ly/3xqkmY7

Online reading:

Mason classification of radial head fractures (Radiopaedia.org)
→ bit.ly/3dTzn8x

A new 'virtual' patient pathway for the management of radial head and neck fractures (Jayaram PR et al. March 2014) → bit.ly/3eutFOd