

Screening and Referral Tools (SRTs) TRAUMATIC and ACUTE ARM/ELBOW PAIN

Soldier Reports With Traumatic or Acute Arm/Elbow Pain

RED FLAGS:

Call Ortho/OT to discuss any positive red flag findings:

History of FOOSH with pain TTP at lateral elbow or signs of dislocation

History of lifting/stretching and feeling a "pop" at biceps insertion

Deformities of forearm/elbow - indication possible fractures

NV compromise on exam

Signs or symptoms of infection with or without constitutional symptoms

Bites - human or animal

Unwillingness to move due to pain

Elbow/forearm edema

Yes

A/P Lateral of Forearm/Elbow
Call Ortho/OT to discuss positive Red Flag findings

★RICE

Relative rest as designated on profile

Ice compress 2-3 times daily for 20 minutes

Compression by use of elastic bandage

Elevation of affected joint above heart during periods of rest

Arm/Elbow Exam (+) Special Tests

No

No

- Profile (A) x 10-14 Days
- Tylenol/NSAIDs for analgesia
- **Rice★**
- Re-evaluate at end of profile

Yes

- Profile (A) x 14-21 Days
- Sling for moderate Symptoms (remove hourly for ROM and Do Not sleep with sling)
- Tylenol/NSAIDs PRN for analgesia
- **Rice★**
- Referral: Occ Therapy or Ortho as indicated, in 3 Days

Symptoms Persist?

Yes

- Profile (B) x 2-3 weeks
- Consider therapeutic injection
- Tylenol/NSAIDs for analgesia
- **Rice★**
- Referral: 7-10 Days to Occ Therapy or Ortho, as indicated

Mostly Resolved

- Duty Specific Profile PRN
- Tylenol / NSAIDs PRN
- **Rice★**
- RTD End of profile anticipated

SPECIAL TESTS EXAM

(+) Pain/Instability With Elbow Valgus Stress
(+) TTP Over Radial Head/Neck
(+) Pain at Elbow With Resisted Wrist Flex/Ext
(+) Tinel's at Ulnar Groove
(+) TTP at Medial/Lateral Epicondyle

ARM/ELBOW EXAM

1) Observe:

Symmetry and resting position
Edema*
Location of soft tissue injury
Color/skin texture abnormalities may suggest nerve injury
Vascular status - assess capillary refill, check radial and ulnar pulses

2) Sensory assessment

3) Motor and tendon screening: able to flex/extend elbow and wrist

4) Bones and Joint Assessment

PROFILES

(A) NO push ups, pull ups, dips, sit ups, weapon carry, dangling, lifting: must wear sling at all times (if prescribed, wear no longer than 10 days unless directed by Ortho/OT).

(B) NO push ups, pull ups, dips, weapon carry, dangling, lifting: Must wear sling at all times (if prescribed, wear no longer than 10 days unless directed by Ortho/OT).

**If sling is prescribed, direct patient to remove hourly for stretching / no sleeping with sling.*