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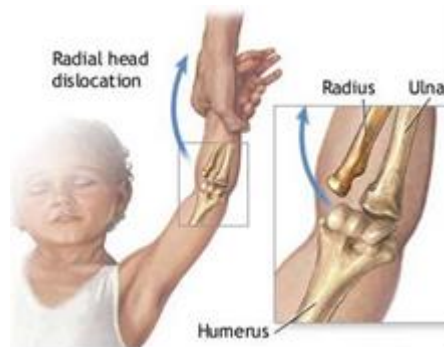
## *Nursemaid's elbow*

### **What is it?**

Nursemaid's elbow is a partial dislocation (or subluxation) of the elbow joint caused by a sudden pull on the extended arm or sometimes a fall on the arm. The technical term for the injury is "*radial head subluxation*". It is common in kids (usually between 1-3 years old) and is easily treated.

### **What causes it?**

Nursemaid's elbow is caused by weakness and a small tear in a ligament that holds the upper "head" of the radius bone (near the elbow joint). This tear allows part of the radius bone to slip out of the ligament.



### **What are the symptoms or signs?**

- Vague pain, irritability
- Most kids refuse to use their arm or their elbow (often they keep their arm rested in their laps).

### **What's the treatment?**

The elbow is put back in to place (or the subluxation is "reduced") by a physician. This is a quick procedure using a special maneuver in the office. No pre-medication is required. Sometimes a "click" is felt when the elbow is successfully reduced. The child may experience a little discomfort during the procedure, but this is only brief. Most children start using the arm/elbow again within 15-30 minutes.

### **Should I get X-rays?**

X-rays are generally *not* needed. However, X-rays may be indicated if the child doesn't resume using their arm later that day or there is concern for other injury or fracture.

### **What about other complications?**

Children who have had a Nursemaid's elbow are at an increased risk for more Nursemaid's elbows in the future. As the child grows, however, the ligament surrounding the radius bone strengthens and most kids grow out of the condition. In rare circumstances, recurrent subluxation may result in need for surgery if the patient does not outgrow condition. Otherwise, the prognosis is excellent.

### **What can I do to help?**

- Be careful to not pull too hard on their arm
- If you are concerned your child may have another Nursemaid's elbow, ask your physician to show you how to reduce the elbow at home.