Nursemaid's Elbow

Your child was seen on _____/____/____ for a [ ] right [ ] left "nursemaid’s elbow."

What is a nursemaid’s elbow?

This is an injury that occurs in children between 3 and 6 years of age. The radius and ulna are bones in the forearm. These 2 bones are attached to the humerus bone (the upper arm bone) by ligaments. "Nursemaid’s (or pulled) Elbow" are the terms used when one of the ligaments slips over the head of the radial bone. It then becomes trapped in the elbow joint. This can occur when the arm is pulled.

What does a child with a nursemaid’s elbow look like?

When a child has a "nursemaid’s elbow," he will hold the arm close to his body, with his arm slightly bent at the elbow. He will not want to use the arm. The child’s elbow may be sore to touch.

How is nursemaid’s elbow treated?

The ligament will be put back in place with gentle manipulation in the clinic or emergency room. X-rays may not be needed.

Home care:

Your child is able to move the arm within 30 minutes after the ligament is put back in place. The injury may happen again if the arm is pulled. Avoid pulling on the arm for the next 2 weeks. If a sling has been prescribed for your child, have him wear it for _____________________.

Preventing nursemaid’s elbow:

Avoid the following:

- Pulling on your child’s arms
- Lifting your child by the arms (Lift him from under the armpits.)
- Swinging your child by the arms

Call your child’s doctor or return for care if:

- Your child has elbow pain.
- Your child’s elbow swells.
- Nursemaid’s elbow injury occurs again.
- You have questions or concerns.