

Paediatric Quick Hits

Pulled Elbow



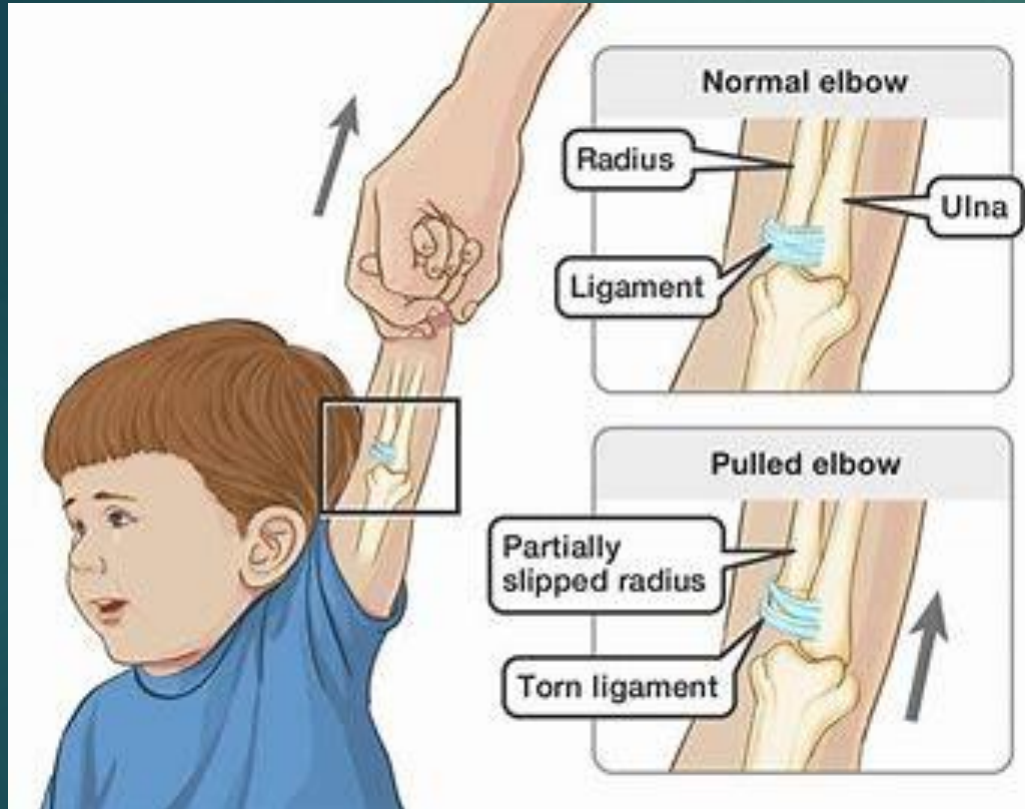
BY VAL ASTLE

Who and why

- ▶ Occurs commonly in children aged 1-4
- ▶ Common mechanisms
 - ▶ Picking child up using their hands
 - ▶ This is often innocuous
 - ▶ Can confuse the picture as child may be on the floor after a simple fall
 - ▶ Swinging child by their arms
 - ▶ Pulling child along when in a rush
- ▶ In 50% of cases there is no history of a causative mechanism!



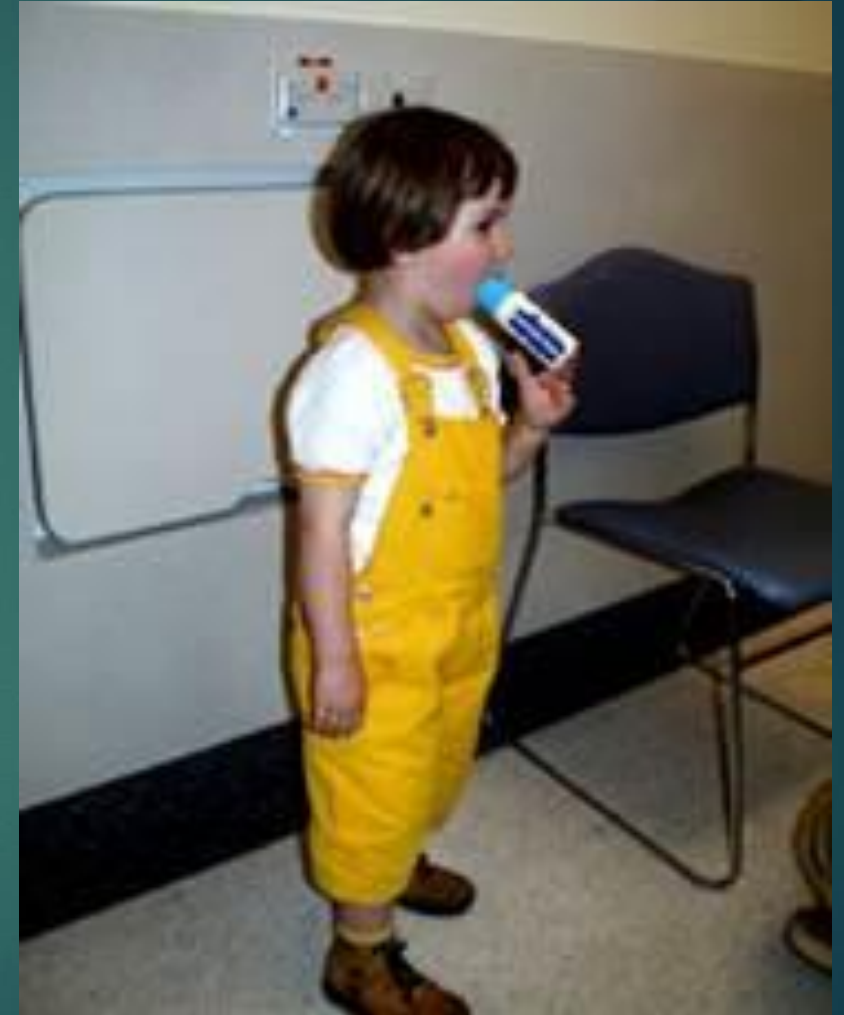
Mechanism



- ▶ Subluxation of the radial head within the annular ligament.
- ▶ Occurs in young children as this ligament is lax and the radial head has not fully developed.

Presentation

- ▶ Child refusing to use the affected arm
- ▶ Arm hung by their side often in extension and pronation
- ▶ No signs of trauma
 - ▶ No swelling or bruising
- ▶ Child will not like you moving their elbow



Investigations

- ▶ If history is clear then **NONE**
- ▶ If history or examination is unclear or suggests a possible differential or if reduction fails, then consider XR



Management

- ▶ Provide analgesia
- ▶ Below is a clip from Tessa at DFTB showing the 2 possible reduction techniques:
 - Hyperpronation
 - Supination with flexion.

<https://youtu.be/uSOLATP3WSY?t=155>

Management tips

- ▶ Advise the parent of what you are going to do
 - ▶ Explain that the **child will cry for the first 30 seconds or so, this is normal**
 - ▶ Explain that as soon as you do the manoeuvre that you will leave so that the parent can comfort the child
 - ▶ Advise that you will then **return 10 minutes later** to see if it has worked
- ▶ Do the manoeuvre **quickly in one smooth movement.**
- ▶ **Once moving arm again then can be discharged**
 - ▶ But if the injury occurred >12 hours ago, then even a successful reduction may not cause them to move the arm freely
 - ▶ In this case- give a sling and advise them to return in 48 hours if still not moving the arm normally.