

# Elbow and arm pain

Elbow and arm pain is not usually a sign of anything serious. If it does not go away after a few weeks, contact your GP.

## How you can ease elbow and arm pain

Try these things for a couple of days:

- put a pack of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel on your arm for 5 minutes, 3 times a day
- take painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen
- raise the arm if it's swollen

### Contact your GP if your arm:

- hurts when you exercise but the pain goes away when you rest
- is swollen and you have a [very high temperature](#) or feel hot and shivery
- is extremely painful and difficult to move
- tingles or feels numb
- has been injured and you heard a snapping noise or your arm has changed shape

These can be signs of a heart problem (angina), an infection or a broken arm.

### Call 999 or 112 or go to your nearest emergency department if

- the pain has come on suddenly
- your chest feels like it's being squeezed

These could be signs of a heart attack or stroke.

# Causes of elbow and arm pain

Apart from an injury, these things can cause arm pain.

Do not self-diagnose. See your GP if you're worried.

Main Symptoms	Pain, stiffness, difficulty moving, swelling
Possible cause	tendonitis (for example, tennis elbow)
Main Symptoms	Pain, tenderness, bruising, swelling
Possible cause	sprains and strains
Main Symptoms	Pain, stiffness coming down from the shoulder
Possible cause	frozen shoulder
Main Symptoms	Pain and stiffness in the joints
Possible cause	arthritis
Main Symptoms	Temperature of 38C or above, feeling shivery, skin broken around the shoulder
Possible cause	inflamed shoulder (bursitis)

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