

Fracture of the Radial Head



A common injury seen around the Holiday Season is a non-displaced fracture of the radial head, commonly referred to as a “chisel fracture” since it looks like someone tapped the surface of the radial head with a hammer and chisel. These most often occur from falling off of a ladder or stool onto an outstretched hand/arm. Although there will be pain, ROM is only slightly to moderately limited. The X-ray will show a subtle lucency on the articular surface of the radial head (usually on the AP film). Most likely, a positive fat pad sign will be seen on the lateral film. Sometimes these fractures are occult, so if the X-ray doesn’t show a fracture but the clinical suspicion is high, follow with special imaging.