

Checklist for Plain Films of the Elbow

Imaging Findings	Cause
Bone Abnormalities	
Discontinuous cortex, displaced bone fragment; abnormal anterior; abnormal marrow signal on MR; secondary elbow joint effusion.	Fracture
Displaced bones with lack of normal alignment (abnormal radiocapitellar line) on XR, CT, and MR	Dislocation
Fragmentation of the capitellum on XR, CT, or MR; abnormal SI on MR	OCD of the capitellum
Sclerotic lesion with serpentine border on XR, CT, or MR; abnormal SI on MR	Bone infarction
Intra-articular Tissue Abnormalities	
Osteophytes, joint space narrowing, subchondral sclerosis or cysts, joint effusion on XR, CT, and MR; focal articular cartilage defects on MR, CT-arthrography, and MR-arthrography	Osteoarthritis
Loss of joint space, marginal erosions on XR, CT, and MR; abnormal synovium and marrow SI on MR	Rheumatoid arthritis
Chondrocalcinosis and/or soft tissue calcifications on XR, CT, MR; secondary osteoarthritis on XR, CT, and MR	Crystal arthropathy
Juxta-articular Tissue Abnormalities	
None on XR; tendon discontinuity on MR or CT; abnormal SI on MR	Tendon tear (usually biceps)
Calcifications (chronic) on XR or CT; abnormal signal on MR	Medial/lateral epicondylitis
Calcifications (chronic) on XR or CT; distended, fluid filled bursa on XR, CT, or MR	Olecranon bursitis
None on XR or CT without arthrography; discontinuous ligament or contrast extravasation on CT-arthrography, MR, and MR-arthrography	Collateral ligament tear
None on XR or CT; abnormal SI on MR	Ulnar neuritis

DICTIONARY TEMPLATE WITH PROMPTS FOR ELBOW RADIOGRAPHS PERFORMED FOR ELBOW PAIN

ELBOW RADIOGRAPHS

INDICATION: Elbow pain.

COMPARISON: [Check priors to see if following a known lesion.]

TECHNIQUE: [].

Bones: [Discontinuity or displaced fragment (fracture). Periostitis (infection). Erosion (infection, inflammatory arthropathy), osteophytes or subchondral cysts (osteoarthritis).]

Joints: [Displaced radial head or radius and ulna with respect to the humerus (subluxation or dislocation). Narrowed joint space (arthritis), osteophytes (osteoarthritis), chondrocalcinosis or synovial calcification (crystal arthropathy), loose body within the joint (fracture or osteoarthritis). Displaced fat pad or “sail sign” (fracture if acute, arthritis if chronic).]

Juxta-articular tissues: [Calcification (epicondylitis or calcific tendinitis). Focal swelling (bursitis).]

IMPRESSION: []

DICTIONARY TEMPLATE WITH PROMPTS FOR ELBOW MRI PERFORMED FOR ELBOW PAIN

MRI ELBOW

INDICATION: Elbow pain.

COMPARISON STUDIES: [Check priors to see if following a known lesion.]

TECHNIQUE: []

FINDINGS:

Bones: [Discontinuity (fracture, tumor, inflammation, or infection). Erosion (inflammatory arthropathy, infection). Increased signal on T2 weighted images (contusion, fracture, tumor, infection, osteochondritis dessicans).]

Elbow intra-articular tissues: [Articular cartilage loss (arthropathy or focal defect from trauma). Osteophytes, cartilage loss, or subchondral marrow changes (osteoarthritis). Effusion (fracture if acute, arthritis if chronic). Loose body (post-traumatic or osteoarthritis).]

Juxta-articular tissues: [<Normal.>]

Biceps, triceps, and brachialis tendons: [Discontinuity (full thickness tendon tear). Swelling or abnormal signal intensity (tendinopathy or partial thickness tendon tear). Fluid along the tendon (tenosynovitis).]

Common flexor and extensor tendons: [Swelling or increased signal along the origin (epicondylitis). Discontinuity (full thickness tear).]

Collateral ligaments: [Discontinuity (tear). “T” sign on MR arthrography (ulnar collateral ligament tear).]

Ulnar and median nerves: [Swelling or increased signal intensity on T2 weighted images (neuritis).]

IMPRESSION: []