

Patient Information Sheet

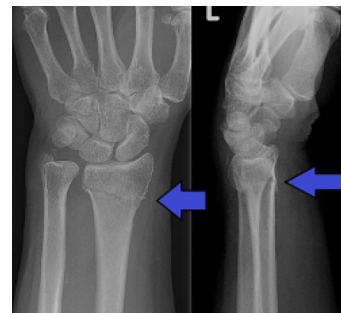
- Distal Radius (Wrist) Fractures

What do I need to know?

What is my diagnosis?

You have broken (fractured) your wrist at the far end of one of the forearm bones (also known as the distal radius). The type of injury you have suffered is painful but usually heals without the need for surgery. A cast/splint is sufficient to manage this type of injury and allow healing.

What does the x-ray look like?



What happens next?

Your x-rays will be reviewed by a radiologist (x-ray expert) and surgeon. We will contact you only if we think you need to come to clinic to discuss your injury. Otherwise follow the instructions below.

What should I expect during recovery?

Week 1 and 2

- The wrist will be painful but it should be tolerable
- Simple painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen should be sufficient to manage your pain
- You may notice some bruising and swelling in the fingers and some mild tingling
- It is very important to keep your wrist above the level of your heart for most of the day and begin **EXERCISES 1 & 2** as illustrated

Weeks 3 and 4

- The pain and bruising will begin to reduce
- You can start to use your hand for day to day activities as much as pain allows
- If the cast becomes wet or loose, call the trauma advice line overleaf

Week 6

- At this stage you can **remove your cast or splint (if you have been given a soft cast, we will have provided you with an additional sheet with instructions on how to remove it yourself)**
- It will feel unusual to begin with and that is **normal**
- Your wrist will still be swollen and may be a slightly different shape
- Some initial ongoing pain over the wrist is normal but this should settle over the next few weeks
- Begin **EXERCISES 3-8**. Repeat x10 each and x3 per day for 4 weeks once you have taken off the cast

Useful phone numbers

ERI: 0131 5361000

SJH: 01506 523000

Waiting list office: 0131 2423437

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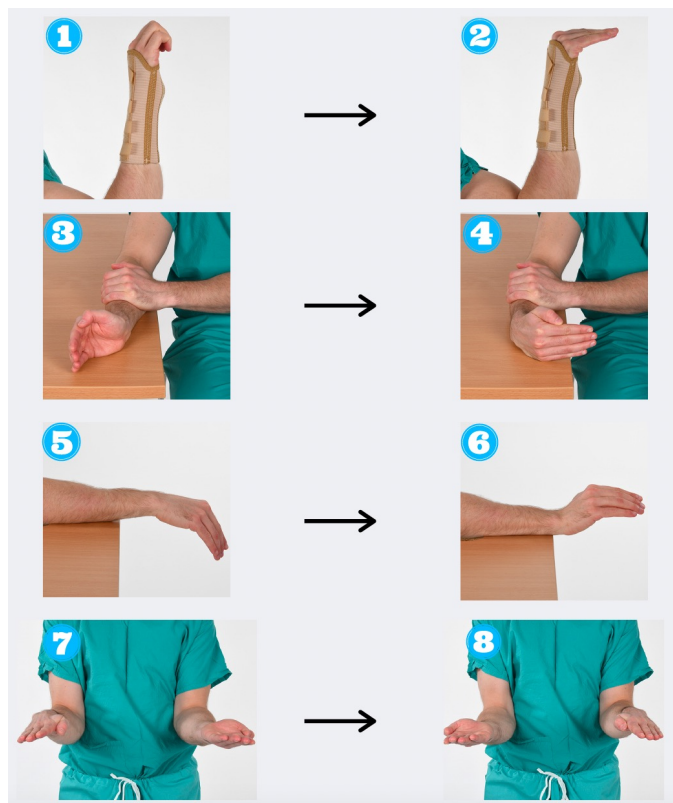
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What do I need to know?

What if my wrist does not heal perfectly?

Very occasionally wrist fractures can heal in a poor position and this can (very rarely) cause stiffness in the wrist. If this is enough to stop you from doing day to day tasks then sometimes corrective surgery can be considered, please contact us using the details overleaf if you are concerned.

Key Exercises



Top Tips

- Avoid heavy lifting whilst in the cast
- Keep your shoulder, elbow, fingers and thumb moving while in the cast to **avoid stiffness**
- **Stop or cut down on smoking** while the bone is healing (smoking has been proven to slow healing and increase the risk of
- 'non-union' [when the
- bone doesn't heal])

Contact Details

Please get in touch via our advice email:

traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk if you have any queries regarding your wrist, for example, your cast becomes wet or loose or you are concerned about the pain or function of your wrist. If you do not receive a reply from this email after 3 working days please use the helpline in hours (8am-5pm): 0131 242 3410

Urgent Issues

Please call the Minor Injuries Unit helpline on 0131 242 3942 (out of hours) for any urgent issues, for example:

- Sudden, severe, constant increase in the pain in your wrist
- Cast feels very tight and constricting around your thumb/fingers with increased swelling of the fingers/thumb
- Rubbing on the skin
- Progressive worsening numbness in the tips of your fingers or thumb

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