

Fracture to Wrist

Information for patients
Virtual Fracture Care Team: Shared Care Plan

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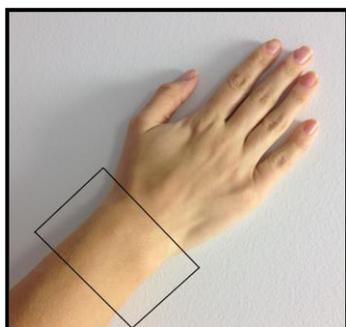
This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the Virtual Fracture Care Team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and a Fracture Care Extended Scope Physiotherapist.

You have sustained fracture to a bone in your wrist (Radius or Ulna) – see picture below.

Your Orthopaedic Consultant has decided that your injury is best managed in a cast or splint. This may change as the healing progresses.

- Healing:** This injury normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal. It is normal for it to continue to ache for 3-6 months after the injury.
- Pain and swelling:** Take pain relief as prescribed. The splint helps healing by keeping the bones in a good position. Elevate the arm to reduce swelling for the first few days.
- Using your arm:** It is important to keep the fingers and thumb moving to prevent stiffness.
- Follow up:** There is a small chance that this fracture can displace (move). Therefore we routinely recommend a repeat x-ray at 1-2 weeks after the injury and a new plaster cast will be applied.

Area of injury



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan,

Or, if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area,

Or, you have any questions, then please phone or email the Virtual Fracture Care Team for advice (contact details above).

Please follow management/ rehabilitation plan shown below:

Weeks since injury	Plan
0-2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You will be in a back slab✓ Use the sling, if provided, for the first few days.✓ Move your fingers and elbow often (complete the stage 1 exercises)✓ You will be reviewed in the Virtual Fracture Clinic
4-6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You will be provided with a full plaster cast if indicated by the Orthopaedic Consultant. This will usually be removed in the Fracture Clinic at 5-6 weeks post injury.✓ Continue to move your fingers often, to prevent stiffness✓ You may use the arm for simple tasks as pain permits✗ You should avoid any heavy lifting until 6 weeks post injury
7 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The fracture is united (healed)✓ You can begin to resume normal activity but be guided by any pain you are experiencing✓ You can start the stage 2 exercises below to loosen up the wrist, which will feel stiff✓ Carry out day to day activities✗ Heavy tasks, heavy lifting or sport may cause some initial discomfort
Over 12	If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice.

Advice for a new injury

Rest and elevation:

Try to rest the arm for the first 24-72 hours to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Raise your wrist above the level of your heart with a sling if it is throbbing.

Movement and exercise:

It is important to keep your fingers and thumb moving while you are in the cast. After the cast is removed your wrist will be stiff, please follow the exercises below to get the movement back.

Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking increases the time it takes for a fracture to heal. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure the best recovery from this injury.

For advice on stopping smoking and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

Exercises
Stage 1 exercises

Finger exercises:

Keep your fingers and thumb moving whilst you are in the plaster as indicated below.



Elbow bend to straight

Bend and straighten your elbow as far as you can.
You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch.
You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.
Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.



Forearm rotations

Begin this exercise with your elbow at your side and bent to 90 degrees. Slowly turn your palm up and down as far as you can go without pain.

You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch.

You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.



Stage 2 exercises - once your plaster has been removed

Finger and wrist movements

Move your wrist side to side then up and down 10-15 times.

You may use your unaffected hand to gently stretch your affected wrist.

You may find the exercises easier to do after soaking your wrist in warm water.

Open and close your hand as shown 10-15 times.





After a few days, hold a soft ball or ball of socks.
Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.
Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.

Gradually return to using your hand and wrist normally as your symptoms allow. This will strengthen your arm and wrist.

You may have been provided with a soft splint, you should start reducing the use of this only using it for heavier lifting as your symptoms allow.

Please use this space for your notes.

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

NHS 111
NHS Choices online

 **111**
www.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone:  01622 224960 or  01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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