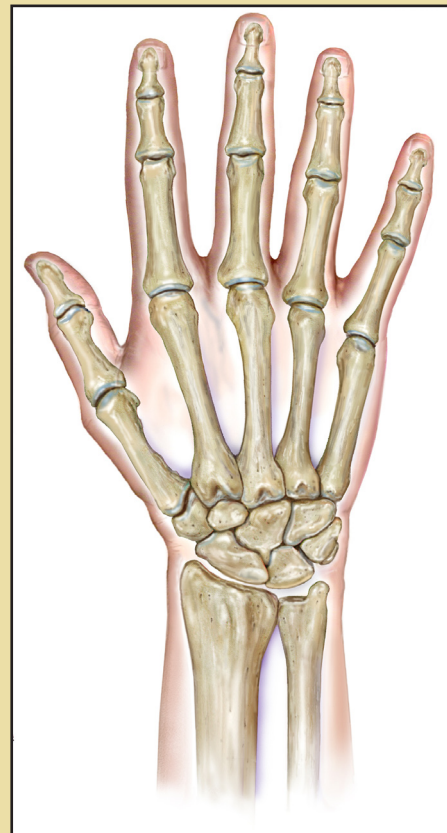


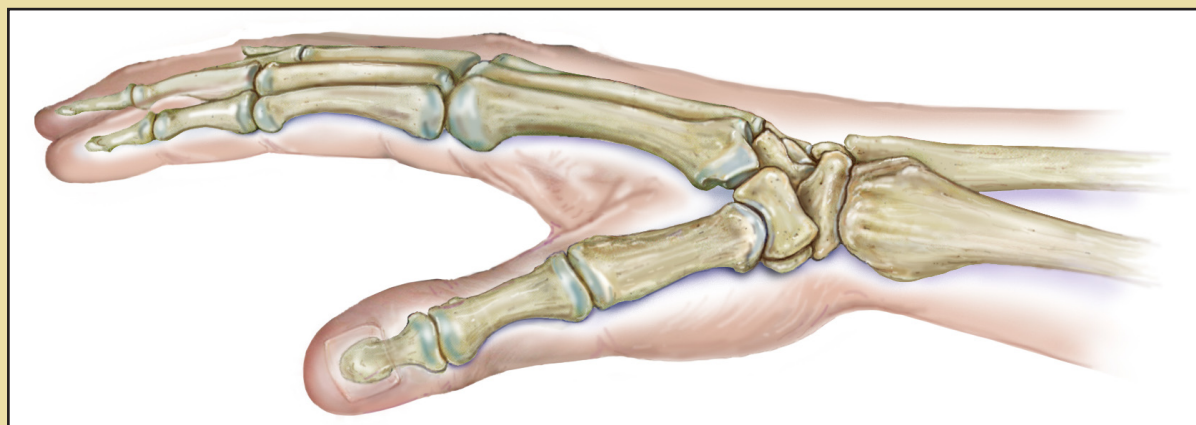
Wrist & Hand Fractures

Anatomy

A fracture occurs when a force is applied to the bone that exceeds the strength of the bone. A classic example is when someone falls and lands on an outstretched hand or wrist. The force from the fall in combination with the angle of the wrist may be sufficient to cause a fracture, or break in the bone. Fractures can be placed into two general categories: displaced or non-displaced. In a non-displaced fracture the bone is broken, but has not shifted or moved out of position. In a displaced fracture, the bone has shifted significantly and the fractured ends of the bone are no longer in proper alignment. Your treatment options will depend on the location and category of the fracture.



Type of Fracture: _____



Symptoms

Symptoms of a wrist fracture may include pain in the wrist, tenderness, swelling in the wrist and/or hand, bruising, and occasionally a visible deformity. A markedly displaced fracture will result in severe pain and may cause numbness in the hand due to swelling. These symptoms can vary greatly, and your fracture may present differently.

CLINIC LOCATIONS

Columbia Heights
Eagan
Forest Lake
Downtown St. Paul
Hastings
Maplewood
Vadnais Heights
Woodbury - Allina
Woodwinds
Health Campus

CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Line
(651) 842-5200

Appointment Line
(651) 842-5201

Online at:
summitortho.com

Hand Center
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Diagnosis

Many fractures can be diagnosed through x-ray and a complete physical exam. In specific situations, your physician may wish to get a MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) or a CT (Computer Tomography) scan to obtain a more detailed look at the bones, joint surface and ligaments.

Treatment

The severity of the fracture will determine the most appropriate course of treatment.

- **Cast:** A cast can be very effective at immobilizing the arm and/or wrist. The hard portion of the cast is composed of fiberglass and once applied requires a special tool to remove. It is imperative that the cast is properly cared for. This includes not getting the cast wet, not putting anything inside the cast (including a ruler or coat hanger) to scratch the skin and only using the hand in the manner instructed by your physician. A shower bag can be provided to you so that the cast doesn't get wet when bathing. If the cast does get wet, you need to contact your physician's office and schedule an appointment to have a new cast applied.

Surgery: In certain cases, surgery may be the best option to repair the fracture. The following is a brief description of the most common surgical techniques.

- **Closed Reduction:** In this instance, the patient is taken to the operating room where the surgeon can reduce the fracture and support the broken bone with a splint. The term "closed" is used because no skin incision is made in this procedure.
- **ORIF:** Open Reduction Internal Fixation is a technique where your Hand Surgeon can, through an incision, place a plate and/or screws to fix the fracture. The size of the plate and the number of screws used depends on the size and severity of the fracture. After surgery you will be placed in a splint that is to be worn until you see your doctor at the first post-operative visit.
- **Pins:** In certain cases your doctor may elect to pin the bones together while they heal. In many cases the pins are percutaneous and will stick out of the skin. It is very important that while the pins are in, you follow the wound care instructions provided by your doctor. The pins need to stay clean and dry to minimize the risk of infection.
- **External Fixators:** External fixators can be utilized to stabilize an extremely unstable fracture. If external fixation is performed, it is imperative that you follow the wound care instructions given to you by the physician. The pin sites need to stay clean and dry to minimize the risk of infection.

Together with your Hand Surgeon, you can determine a treatment plan that is most appropriate for your injury and situation.