

# Distal radial fracture

## discharge advice

You have broken your forearm bone at the wrist (distal radial fracture). As final x-rays show the bone is now well aligned, we hope to treat this simply in a plaster cast.

### **What will happen when I leave hospital?**

An orthopaedic consultant will review your x-rays. You will get a telephone call following this (from a withheld number) to confirm your treatment.

### **Collar and cuff/sling**

This will help provide pain relief and prevent swelling of the fingers. Try to keep the hand elevated as much as possible.

### **Movements**

We recommend that you exercise your fingers. Be guided by the level of discomfort you feel. We suggest you remove the sling twice daily and gently bend and straighten your elbow whilst supporting the weight of your arm. These movements will help reduce hand swelling and prevent stiffness of the joints in your upper limb.

### **Painkillers**

We suggest Paracetamol and Ibuprofen, if you can take them. Ask your pharmacist for advice. The pain usually improves after the first two weeks but can take longer.

### **Sleeping**

You may be more comfortable elevating the arm on pillows rather than wearing the sling overnight.

### **Worsening symptoms**

If the pains worsen despite painkillers, the fingers become very numb/pins and needles or the plaster is very tight despite elevation, you should seek advice.

### **Fracture clinic review**

If necessary arrangements will be made for you to attend a fracture clinic to be reviewed by an orthopaedic surgeon after one week. At this clinic decisions will be made regarding further imaging such as x-rays and follow up. In some cases further x-rays may reveal that an operation will be needed. If so the orthopaedic surgeon will discuss this with you at the clinic.

### **Cast removal and Physiotherapy**

Generally the plaster will be removed between four and six weeks. You will then be encouraged to start moving the wrist (it will initially be stiff). If required, physiotherapy will be organised.

### **Physiotherapy**

This is usually started three weeks after your injury with gentle 'pot-stirring' exercises.

### **When can I return to regular activities?**

Once out of plaster case, it will take several weeks before you can return to regular activities. This may be longer if your work involves strenuous use of your upper limb.

Should you have any worries or concerns please contact:

Your ..... team is based at .....

Telephone: .....

## Confidentiality

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We promise to use your information fairly and legally, and in-line with local and national policies. You have a right to understand how your information is used and you can request a copy of the information we hold about you at any time.

For further information contact the Information Governance Team on 01228 608998 or email [Information.Governance@cumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:Information.Governance@cumbria.nhs.uk)

## Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the Patient Experience Team. Email: [PET@cumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:PET@cumbria.nhs.uk) Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 5547

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call: **01228 603890**

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Or write to Engagement and Communications  
Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ