

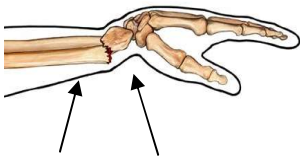
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh Emergency Department

Manipulation of Wrist Fractures

A guide for patients

Introduction

You have broken the radius bone in your wrist. Often in this type of break (fracture), the pieces move out of alignment. Manipulating them back into a more normal position allows the break to heal and reduces the risk of developing complications such as arthritis later on.



Radius bone Wrist joint

At the RIE, these fractures are usually manipulated in the Emergency Department (ED) under a type of anaesthetic called Intravenous Regional Anaesthesia (also known as a “Bier’s Block”); this will be discussed with you by the Anaesthetist.

The procedure itself

The Anaesthetist will give you an injection to numb your arm. A special cuff (which looks similar to a blood pressure cuff but is inflated much tighter) prevents the anaesthetic drug spreading elsewhere.

An ED doctor will manipulate the bones into a better position and a cast will be reapplied. X-rays will be taken; a second manipulation may be necessary. Once finished, you will be taken to the ED Observation ward where you can have some breakfast. Following a period of further observation (about 30 minutes), you will be discharged with a follow up appointment requested.

Advantages of performing manipulation under Bier’s block

- It is a safe, reliable and routine procedure.
- It is performed in the ED: in most cases, you won’t need to be admitted to a ward and then wait longer for an operation.
- It avoids the need for strong sedatives or the additional risks of a General Anaesthetic, particularly important if you have other medical problems.
- You can go home sooner and won’t be drowsy afterwards.

Potential complications of the manipulation

- **Superficial skin wounds:** Rare, but can occur if your skin is very thin.
- **Slight rash:** Rare and should resolve itself over the next few days/weeks.
- **Nerve injury:** Very rare complication associated with the use of the tourniquet. However, as this is a short procedure it is very unlikely to occur.

Instructions for the day of the procedure

- Do not eat anything from midnight the night before. You may drink water until **2 hours** beforehand.
- Take your morning medication including painkillers - but NOT diabetic medication - with a sip of water. If you have lots of medication, bringing a list is helpful.
- Please return to the ED at your allocated time and book in at reception. You will then be asked to wait in the ED waiting area. The ED nurse will collect you from here when it is time for your procedure.
- Please ensure that someone is able to accompany you home following the procedure.

Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh Emergency Department

Manipulation of Wrist Fractures

A guide for patients

When you get home

- Try to keep your arm elevated for the first 12 hours to help any swelling go down. If the cast still feels tight, continue this for another 12 hours.
- Do not put jewellery back onto the injured limb until after fracture clinic.
- Keep moving your fingers, elbow and shoulder to prevent stiffness and encourage circulation.
- Do not be alarmed if bruising travels to your fingers or elbow - this is very common after wrist fractures.
- You should return to the ED as soon as possible if your fingers feel swollen, tingly, numb or cold, are painful even after painkillers or turn blue or white.

Plaster care

- Do not get the cast wet - this will weaken it and your bone will no longer be properly supported.
- Even if the cast makes your skin feel very itchy, don't be tempted to poke anything underneath it - this could cause a nasty sore.
- If the cast is uncomfortable through being too tight, loose, is rubbing or becomes cracked/broken please seek advice as follows:
- **If the plaster cast was applied in the Minor Injury (MIU) or ED** please contact MIU for advice on the number opposite (open 0745 - midnight daily).
- If the plaster cast problem cannot wait until the morning to be reviewed, then please contact the ED on the number opposite.
- **If the plaster cast was applied by the plaster technicians** in RIE Out Patient Department 6, then please contact the Plaster Room for advice, on the number opposite (open Mon - Thurs 0830 - 1600 & Fri 0830 - 1200). Out with these hours please contact MIU or the ED.

Please Reattend the Emergency Department on

_____ at _____

Remember: Do not eat anything from midnight.

You may drink water until 2 hours beforehand.

Follow up

An appointment in the Trauma Triage Clinic will be requested electronically (see separate information sheet which you will receive AFTER your Bier's Block procedure). If the broken bones remain in a good alignment, no more may need to be done. Your wrist will stay in plaster until the bones heal (around 4-6 weeks).

If the fracture is unstable or the bones have moved out of alignment again, you may need an operation.

Useful contact details

Minor Injury Unit	0131 242 3942
Emergency Department	0131 242 1300
Plaster Room	0131 242 3408