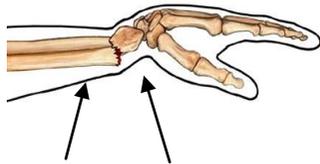


# Manipulation of Wrist Fractures

## 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 (moving) 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 (set) the bones into a better position and a cast will be applied. X-rays will be taken; a second manipulation may be necessary. Once finished, you will be taken back to the main part of the ED where you will be offered something to eat. Following a period of further observation (about 1 hour), 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 cuff. 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.
- Please ensure that someone is able to accompany you home following the procedure.

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### 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 you have been seen at the Trauma Triage Clinic (see below).
- 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 contact the Plaster Room for advice during the following hours:** Mon-Thurs 08.30-16.00 and Fri 08.30-12.00 (Plaster Room tel. 0131 242 3408). Out with these hours contact the Emergency Department (0131 242 1300).

### Follow up

An appointment for the Trauma Triage Clinic will be requested electronically (see separate information sheet). 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.

**Please Re-attend the Emergency Department on**

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember: Do not eat anything from midnight**

**You may drink water until 2 hours beforehand**