

Colles' Fracture

One of the most common forms of upper limb fracture is a Colles' fracture. This occurs at the wrist and is very common after a fall on an outstretched hand.

At your wrist joint you have two bones from your forearm and multiple small bones in your hand. When you fall onto an outstretched hand very commonly the distal end of your radius bone is fractured.



As a result of this your wrist can look a little like a dinner fork due to the displaced bone at the wrist joint. This is the main presentation that can indicate a fracture over a mild sprain or contusion. An X-Ray is required to confirm a fracture and then whether the fracture is displaced or not. If displaced, an open reduction and internal fixation surgery is required to place the bone in the correct position to allow it to heal properly.

You are then normally placed in a cast and sling for around six weeks to allow the fracture to heal appropriately. Once past this phase, physiotherapy becomes important to regain range of motion and strength, not only at your wrist but also your elbow and shoulder.

This is due to the prolonged period of inactivity. It is very important to complete a course of rehabilitation so that you are not left with residual weakness or limitations in movement at any of these joints, especially your wrist.