



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: WRIST FRACTURE (NONDISPLACED)

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a fracture (break) of a bone in your wrist. As with any broken bone, the injury is serious, and proper treatment is essential. Fortunately, the broken bone has not been pushed out of normal position (displaced), which makes treatment and healing easier.

Swelling and pain in the wrist occur with a fracture; the amount of each varies with individuals. Similarly, the amount of time your wrist will be difficult to use varies. The temporary splint applied at the Student Health Center will help minimize pain and swelling.

Follow-up with your personal/referral doctor is essential. Your doctor can apply a cast as necessary, make sure the wrist is healing properly, and continue treatment if healing is incomplete

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR WRIST FRACTURE:

1. Above all, minimize use of the wrist. Keep the joint still by wearing the splint. Keep the splint on day and night. The splint can be removed briefly for bathing, dressing, or to adjust the splint.
2. Elevate the wrist above the level of your heart. Apply cold packs off-and-on. Elevation and cold during the first two days after injury help minimize pain and swelling.
3. Over-the-counter pain medications can relieve discomfort associated with a broken wrist. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen can be taken, depending on individual preference.
4. The provider may prescribe stronger pain medication. Take the prescription medicine only if needed; do not take the medication and perform dangerous activities such as driving a car or operating machinery.
5. Make a *prompt* follow-up appointment with your personal/referral orthopedic (bone) doctor. Be sure to tell the office that you have a broken wrist, and need a “work-in” appointment in the next few days. Pick up your X-rays before your appointment. The orthopedic doctor can follow the progress of healing, help minimize the possibility of long-term wrist problems, and assist you in returning to normal activities with the arm.