

Greenstick fracture in the distal radius or ulna

(bones in the wrist)

For children who need a soft cast
and no follow up appointment.

Physiotherapy department



What is this information about?

This information tells you about greenstick fractures of the wrist. A greenstick fracture is a break on one side of the bone.

It tells you:

- How to look after your child after they have sustained a greenstick fracture.
- How to look after their cast.
- How to remove the soft cast at the appropriate time.
- Who to contact if you need further help and support.

How long does this injury take to heal?

This normally takes approximately 4 to 6 weeks to heal. It is normal for it to continue to ache for a few weeks after this.

What should I do if my child is in pain or their hand is swollen?

Your child may have swelling and pain in the wrist and hand for a few weeks after their injury. Swelling is often worse at the end of the day.

Taking pain medication and elevating (raising) their wrist will help.

Can my child use their arm with this injury?

They can keep their fingers, thumb, elbow and shoulder moving to prevent stiffness.

They should avoid sport and high impact activities for 4 to 6 weeks. This includes trampolines, scooters and football.

The backslab helps by keeping the arm still. This will be changed to a soft cast in the plaster room. This can be removed at home after 6 weeks (instructions below).

When can my child return to sport?

There is a small increased risk of injury for up to 12 weeks. However, most children can return to full sports at 4 to 6 weeks post injury. Non-contact sports such as swimming can be started as soon as your child is comfortable.

Does my child need follow up for this injury?

Normally we do not follow up patients with this type of injury as they heal well.

If after 6 weeks your child still has significant pain or swelling, please contact us using the details at the bottom of this leaflet.

What should I do if my child's cast feels too tight?

Make sure they are elevating their arm enough to keep the swelling down. Check that they are still able to wriggle their fingers and they are a good colour.

If you are worried about their hand circulation or need more advice, contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic or plaster room.

Plaster room contact details:

Worthing: 01903 205111, Ext. 85445

Chichester: 01243 788122 Ext. 33393

What should I do if my child's symptoms have changed?

If they have any of these symptoms, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic:

- Increased joint pain.
- Increasing swelling with difficulty to bend the fingers or thumb.
- Hypersensitivity to touching the skin.
- Shiny or red skin.
- Increased hair growth on skin.
- A sensation of the hand not belonging to you.

How do I remove the cast?



Cut off the cast with normal scissors

Open the cast and slide the arm out

If it is too difficult to cut the cast:

Soak the cast for 10 minutes in a basin of water
or in the bath as part of bath time.



Then unroll the cast.

Find the end of the roll of the cast and unroll the coloured strip. This may need a few tugs as it will be sticky. This will not affect the healed fracture. Keep unwrapping till there is no coloured bandage left, then slip off any padding.

The bandage and padding can be thrown away in a normal bin.

How do I contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic?

Call or leave a message on:

Worthing

01903 205111 Ext. 86312

St Richards

01243 788122 Ext. 35503

Email: uhsussex.vfc@nhs.net

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This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in St Richard's Hospital and Worthing Hospital.

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