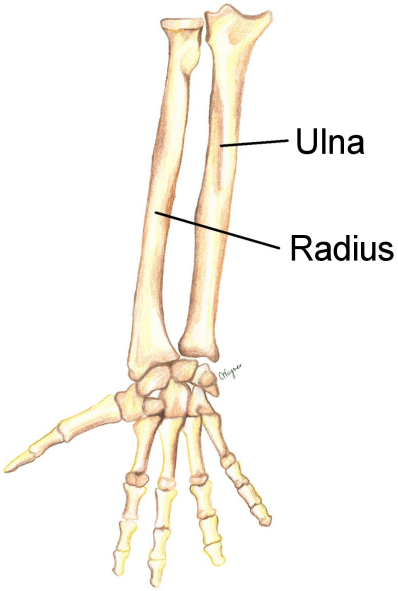
Colles Fracture

A Colles fracture is a type of broken wrist. It means the radius bone is broken (*fractured*).
The radius is the bone of your forearm on the thumb side. The forearm is the part of your arm between the elbow and your wrist. Your forearm is made up of two bones. These are the radius and *ulna*. Often when the radius is broken, the ulna may also be broken. A cast or splint is used to protect and keep your injured bone from moving. The cast or splint will be on generally for about 5 to 6 weeks.



SYMPTOMS
The usual problems are pain, swelling, and bruising.

DIAGNOSIS
The diagnosis of this injury is usually made with x-rays.

TREATMENT
Generally the fracture is held in place with a cast until it is healed. In a healthy person the casting lasts about 4 to 6 weeks but will depend on age and other factors.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- Keep the injured part elevated while sitting or lying down. Keep the injury above the level of your heart (the center of the chest). This will decrease swelling and pain.
- Apply ice to the injury for 15 to 20 minutes, four times per day while awake, for 2 days. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a thin towel between the bag of ice and your cast or splint.
- If you have a plaster or fiberglass ***cast***:
  - Do not try to scratch the skin under the cast using sharp or pointed objects.
  - Check the skin around the cast every day. You may put lotion on any red or sore areas.
  - Keep your cast dry and clean.
- If you have a plaster ***splint***:
  - Wear the splint as directed.
  - You may loosen the elastic around the splint if your fingers become numb, tingle, or turn cold or blue.
- Do not put pressure on any part of your cast or splint. It may break. Rest your cast only on a pillow the first 24 hours until it is fully hardened.
- Your cast or splint can be protected during bathing with a plastic bag. Do not lower the cast or splint into water.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- Your cast gets damaged or breaks.
- You have more severe pain or swelling than you did before the cast.
- Your skin or nails below the injury turn blue or gray, or feel cold or numb.
- There is a bad smell or new stains and/or pus like *(purulent*) drainage coming from under the cast.

MAKE SURE YOU:
- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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