

Patient Information Sheet: Wrist Ligament Injuries

What Are Wrist Ligament Injuries?

Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect bones and stabilize joints. In the wrist, several ligaments hold the small bones together and allow smooth movement. A wrist ligament injury occurs when one or more of these ligaments are stretched, partially torn, or completely torn, often as a result of a fall onto an outstretched hand, sports injury, or sudden twisting movement.

Common examples include:

- Scapholunate ligament injury (between two key wrist bones)
- Lunotriquetral ligament injury
- TFCC tear (triangular fibrocartilage complex), affecting the small ligaments on the little finger side of the wrist

Common Symptoms

- Pain on the top or sides of the wrist
- Swelling or bruising after injury
- Clicking, popping, or “giving way” sensation
- Reduced grip strength
- Difficulty twisting the wrist (e.g., turning a key or doorknob)
- Ongoing pain that does not settle after a minor sprain

Diagnosis

Your doctor will assess your wrist for swelling, tenderness, and stability. Investigations may include:

- X-rays to check for bone alignment and rule out fractures
- MRI or ultrasound to visualize ligament tears
- Arthroscopy (keyhole camera test) if the diagnosis remains uncertain

Treatment Options

1. Non-Surgical (Conservative) Treatment

- Rest and immobilization: A wrist splint or cast for 4–6 weeks to allow healing.
- Ice and elevation: Helps reduce pain and swelling.
- Pain relief: Over-the-counter medication as advised.
- Physiotherapy: Once pain settles, exercises restore strength and flexibility.

2. Surgical Treatment

If the ligament is completely torn or the wrist becomes unstable:

- Ligament repair or reconstruction may be required.

- Temporary pins or anchors may be inserted to hold the bones in position while healing.
- Post-operative rehabilitation is essential for recovery.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

- Mild sprains: Usually heal in 4–6 weeks.
- Severe tears or surgical repairs: May take 3–6 months for full recovery.
- Early movement exercises (guided by a physiotherapist) help prevent stiffness.
- Protective splints may be used during sports or heavy activity for several months.

When to Seek Medical Advice

Seek medical help if:

- Wrist pain persists beyond a few days after injury
- You notice clicking, weakness, or reduced grip strength
- The wrist appears deformed or unstable
- Swelling or bruising increases instead of improving

Please Contact Us for further advice: info@basinghandclinic.co.uk