Lothian NHS Board

NHS Lothian Headquarters

Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh
EH8 8BG
www.nhslothian.scot

Date 10 November 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 12034

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
Direct Line 0131 465 5687
loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
richard.mutch@nhs.scot

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – SUSPECTED SCAPHOID FRACTURE

I write in response to your request for information in relation to suspected scaphoid fracture.

Question:

- With regards to your organisation: if a patient attends your Trust's ED, UTC or MIU with a suspected scaphoid fracture, but normal initial X-rays, I would like to know how these patients are managed. Specifically:
  1. What is your Trust/typical follow up pathway, including expected timescales, for these patients? (e.g. referral to fracture clinic and review at 2 weeks, or discharge with advice and to return if any concerns)
  2. What imaging follow up is conducted on these patients and at what time interval typically (e.g. repeat X-ray then MRI, CT, etc.)
  3. Please supply a copy of your local clinical guidelines/pathways and patient advice leaflet you use

Answer:

1.	Our routine pathway is that all suspected scaphoid injuries are referred to TTC (Trauma Triage Clinic) for consultant review of the case and scaphoid radiographs. Once reviewed, our protocol is that if low energy/risk and scaphoid radiographs are clear then they are discharged with a splint and advice sheet and told to recontact info if symptoms do not settle. If high energy/risk, then review in clinic at two weeks for repeat imaging and assessment with immobilization in the meantime. If confirmed fracture they are seen in hand clinic at one week for repeat imaging and

	assessment. All suspected and confirmed scaphoids injuries are referred to orthopaedics for orthopaedic review. Any trauma triage clinics required for repeat xrays are organised by orthopaedics. Enclosed Emergency Department leafltets for information
2.	*Follow-up or discharge is organised by orthopaedics, and follow-up decisions are made by orthopaedic trauma triage clinic not by minor injuries unit as it is outside the remit of the department.*
3.	All follow-up information sheets given to patients can be accessed by the Link below: https://www.edinburghorthopaedics.org/patient-information/ Specifically - https://www.edinburghorthopaedics.org/media/5dza50fc/scaphoid-fracture-v2-0.pdf

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive
Enc.

Patient Information Sheet – 72B

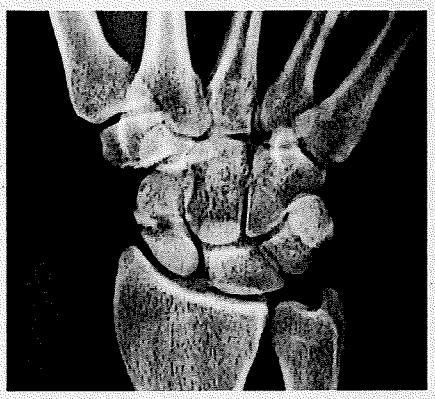
Scaphoid Fractures

What do I need to know?

Edinburgh Orthopaedics

What is my diagnosis?

You have broken (fractured) a small bone in your wrist called the scaphoid. The type of injury you have suffered is painful but almost always heals **without the need for surgery**.



What happens next?

- Your will need to wear a splint or cast for **6 to 8 weeks.**
- You will receive a telephone consultation or fracture clinic review in the next **2 weeks.**
- Please ensure the Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit reception staff have your mobile and phone home numbers.

What can I expect during my recovery?

Weeks 1 to 8: time in cast/splint

- The wrist will be painful, but the cast or splint will help
- Simple painkillers like paracetamol and ibuprofen can be taken
- You may notice some bruising and swelling in the fingers
- Perform the exercises on the next page to keep your fingers and thumb moving
- You can use your hand for light day to day activities but no heavy lifting.

Weeks 8 to 12

- Once you come out of the case the wrist will feel unusual, but this is normal
- You may be referred to physiotherapy
- There is **no specific time you can drive again**. It is **illegal** to drive when wearing a sling, splint, cast or moonboot. As you recover, it is your legal responsibility to be certain before you return to driving that you are able to control your vehicle normally and safely.

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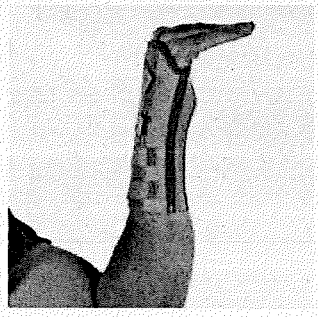
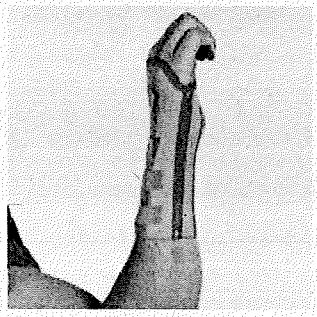
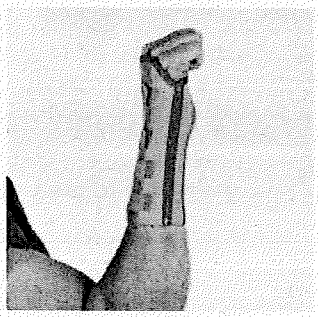
Patient Information Sheet – 72B
Scaphoid Fractures
What do I need to know?

Edinburgh Orthopaedics

Top tips

- Elevate your wrist above the level of your heart when you are at home to reduce swelling
- Keep your fingers, elbow and shoulder moving despite your wrist being immobilised
- Stop or cut down on smoking while the bone is healing. Smoking has been proven to slow healing.

Key exercises

Finger movements

- Bend your knuckles fully then tuck in your fingers before making a full fist.

Get in touch

Please get in touch via our trauma email if you have any queries about your injury:
traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Helpline Monday-Friday (8am – 4pm): 0131 242 3410

Urgent issues

Please call the department where you were initially seen about your injury:

- **RIE Minor Injuries Unit**: 0131 242 3942 (8am – midnight, if after midnight contact RIE Emergency Department 0131 242 1300)
- **WGH Minor Injuries Clinic**: 0131 537 3468 (9am – 8.30pm)
- **SJH Emergency Department**: 01506 523 011 (24 hours

V2.1 approved by NHS Lothian Patient Information Team: June 2025
Review date: June 2028

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Patient Information Sheet – 72A
Soft Tissue Wrist Injury
What do I need to know?

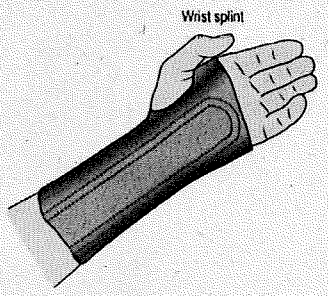
Edinburgh Orthopaedics

What is my diagnosis?

NB ED/MIU Staff: this leaflet is solely for patients referred to the TTC. All other patients could be provided with ED strains/sprains leaflet.

You have hurt your wrist, but the X-rays have not shown any breaks. This can be a painful injury but almost always heals by itself. A wrist splint helps the pain but should be removed as the pain settles to avoid wrist stiffness.

The clinician in the Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit has asked for your X-rays to be double checked by the Orthopaedic team to make sure all the small bones in the wrist are intact.



What happens next?

- Your X-rays and notes will be checked by a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

If nothing further is needed, we will not contact you

- If any other treatment or assessment is needed we will contact you by telephone or post
- Please ensure the Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit reception staff have your mobile and phone home numbers.

What can I expect during my recovery?

Weeks 1-2

- The wrist will be painful but it should be tolerable while it is secured in the splint with normal sensation in your fingers. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can help this.
- Begin exercises 1 to 4 shown overleaf
- You may notice some bruising and swelling in the fingers and some mild tingling/numbness.

Weeks 3 to 8

- The splint can be removed once the pain has reduced
- It will feel unusual to begin with and that is normal
- Begin exercises 5 to 8. Repeat 3 times a day for 10 repetitions.

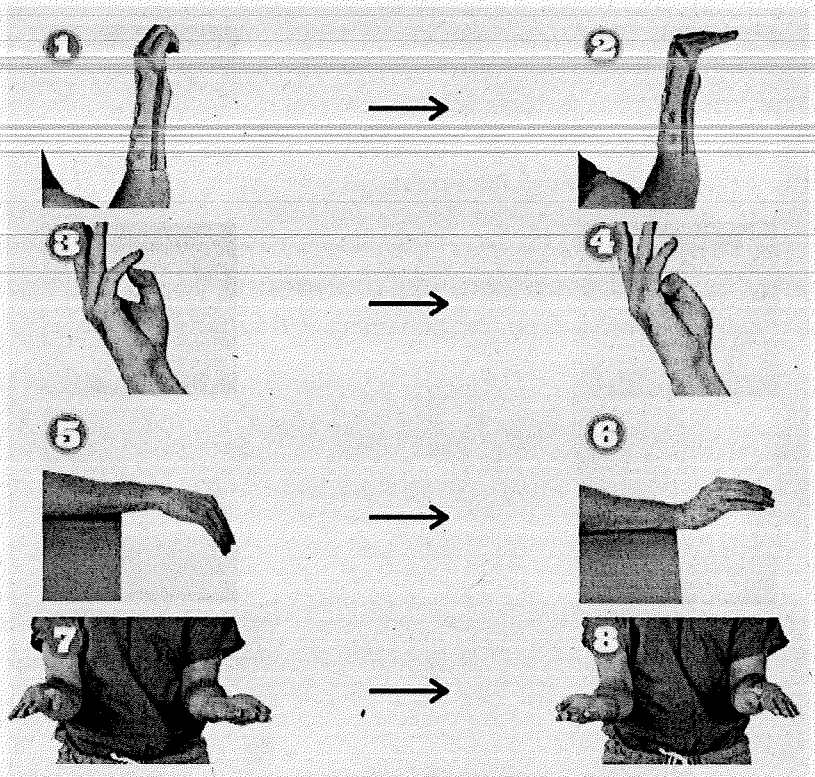
Very rarely, there can be a fracture that doesn't appear on your first x-ray.

If your wrist is still sore in two months please contact us, and we will arrange a repeat x-ray.

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Patient Information Sheet – 72A
Soft Tissue Wrist Injury
What do I need to know?

Edinburgh Orthopaedics



Top tips

- Keep your fingers, elbow and shoulder moving as much as you can
- Stop or cut down on smoking.

Get in touch

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traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

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