

# Scaphoid injury to your wrist

## Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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### What is the scaphoid bone?

The scaphoid bone is at the base of the thumb, and is 1 of 8 bones which form the human wrist.

### How is the scaphoid bone injured?

A fall onto an outstretched hand (FOOSH) is the most common cause of a scaphoid injury.

A high speed injury for example, a road traffic accident, could also be a cause of this injury.



Scaphoid  
bone

### What are the symptoms of a scaphoid fracture?

After a FOOSH injury, a scaphoid fracture may be suspected if:

- you have pain when you gently press at the base of your thumb.
- you have reduced movement in the thumb and wrist, due to pain or swelling.

### How are scaphoid fractures diagnosed?

If a scaphoid fracture is suspected, you will have an x-ray of your wrist. This will involve 5 images being taken.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What does it mean if the X-ray is normal?

In some cases, a scaphoid fracture will not show up initially on the first xray taken in the Emergency Services (A&E)

If a fracture is suspected, you will have an follow up appointment in the Soft Tissue Review Clinic, in 10-14 days for further assessment.

## Your wrist splint

A splint will be fitted to your wrist. Wear this at all times during the first 2 weeks. Only remove it when you need to wash your hands. The support from the splint will stop your wrist from moving as it gives the same support as a plaster cast. The support it gives should also ease any pain.

## What will happen when I return to the Soft Tissue Review Clinic?

After 10 to 14 days you will be seen again in the Review clinic based at the Leicester General Hospital, in The Sports and Exercise Medicine Department. Further details will be sent with your appointment.

- If symptoms have eased the splint will be removed. You may be given exercises to help your wrist function return to normal, which may take a few weeks.

If you are still having pain , you will:

- be sent for another X-ray.
- You may asked to remove your splint up to 3 times daily to start gentle exercises in this booklet. If you are getting better, you can start to leave the splint off for longer and continue your normal activities without wearing the splint.
- You will be given another clinic appointment or the Soft Tissue Review clinic.
- If a fracture is diagnosed on the 1st or 2nd X-ray, a plaster cast will be applied and you will be referred to the Fracture Clinic, at the LRI.
- If the clinician advises that you need an MRI scan, you may be asked to keep the splint on and not to start exercises.

If you still have pain after 3 months you should contact your GP unless you have been referred to the Fracture Clinic.

**Exercises:** Start these exercises 3 times daily when you are advised to do so.



**Exercise 1**

Keep the wrist and fingers straight.

Make a fist, then straighten the fingers.

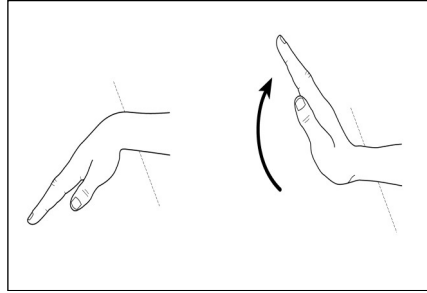
Repeat up to 10 times.



**Exercise 2**

Take your thumb across the palm of your hand

to the base of your little finger. Repeat up to 10 times.

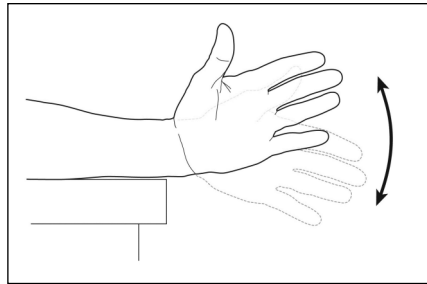


**Exercise 3**

Rest your forearm on a table with the hand relaxed over the edge.

Drop the hand down, then lift the hand up.

Repeat up to 10 times.



**Exercise 4**

Rest your forearm on a table with your thumb pointing up.

Move the hand up and down.

Repeat up to 10 times.

**Contact Details:**

Emergency Department - Minor Injuries: 0116 258 5727.

Soft Tissue Review Clinic 0116 258 8296 (Monday to Friday 08:30am to 4:30pm)

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