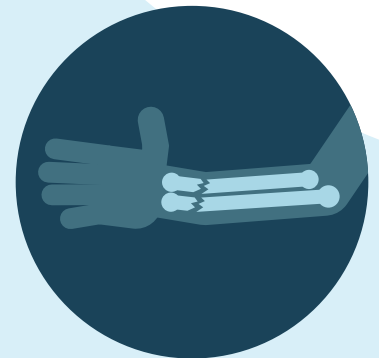


CRAFT study Patient information leaflet for parents and carers

What is a broken wrist?

Your child has broken their wrist and the bones have moved out of place. Broken wrists are common injuries in children.

In children under 11, the bones are still growing. This means children with this injury can often be treated differently to adults with a similar injury.



About the treatment

Your child's wrist will be placed in a plaster cast. The bone will heal and straighten naturally over the coming weeks. Most children recover well and have no long-term problems.

In some situations, surgery may be recommended. Your doctor will explain what is best for your child's specific injury.



What does the evidence show?

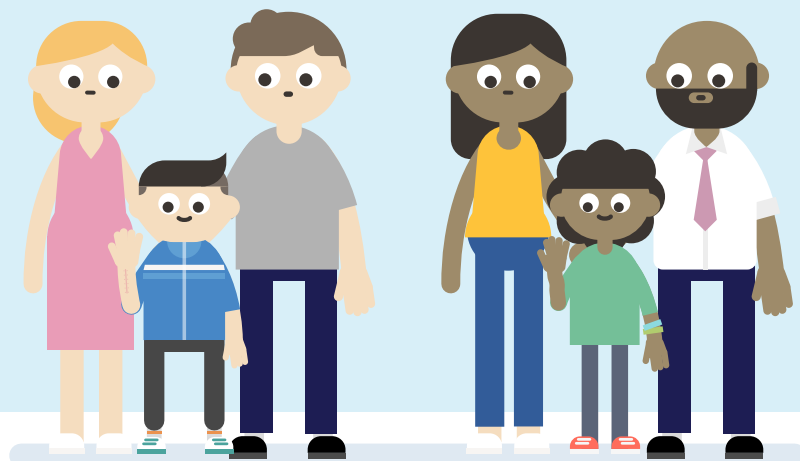
Doctors were not always sure whether surgery worked better than a plaster cast for this type of injury. That's why researchers carried out the CRAFT study – a large UK study involving 750 children aged 4 to 10 with this type of fracture. Half were treated with a cast and half had surgery.

The study found that both treatments led to the same long-term recovery. Children who had surgery had a very slight improvement in arm function at 3 months, but families said the difference was hardly noticeable and generally not enough to feel surgery was necessary. By 6 months, arm function was the same in both groups.

Parents in both groups were initially worried about how the arm looked – either due to scars from surgery or a slight bend during recovery. By 6 months, both groups were equally happy with the appearance.

Surgery was linked with more complications and higher costs for families and the NHS.

Based on these results, most children with this type of broken wrist can now be safely treated with a plaster cast, without surgery.



What to expect during recovery

After the injury, it is normal for your child's wrist to feel sore or uncomfortable. Simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can help. Swelling is common in the first few days and usually improves with rest and keeping the arm raised.

The cast is usually worn for several weeks. Once it is removed, your child can gradually return to normal use of the arm as movement improves.

Most children feel more confident using their arm by three months, and full recovery is usually achieved by six months.



Follow-up

Your hospital or clinic will explain the follow-up plan. Most children are reviewed to make sure the wrist is healing as expected.

Further information

More details about the CRAFT study: www.CRAFTstudy.org

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