



What is a Scaphoid Fracture?

The scaphoid bone is one of the eight small bones located on the thumb side of your wrist.

Scaphoid fractures usually occur after a fall on an outstretched hand. There is pain after the injury and pain may improve over days or weeks. Patients often delay seeing a doctor because it feels like a badly sprained wrist and because of this improvement in pain.



How are scaphoid fractures diagnosed?

A scaphoid fracture is suspected if you have had a fall and have pain and tenderness on the thumb side of your wrist. X-Ray is usually the first test performed.

Occasionally the X-Ray may not show the fracture immediately after the injury, but your wrist may be splinted, if a fracture is still suspected, and a repeat X-Ray is organised one or two weeks later. Occasionally a CT scan or MRI is necessary.



What happens after a scaphoid fracture is diagnosed?

Scaphoid fractures are difficult to heal and a scaphoid fracture that does not heal may lead to arthritis of the wrist. Blood supply of the scaphoid is poor and can affect the healing process and health of the bone. If the fracture is not displaced, it can be treated in a plaster cast. Fracture healing happens slowly over 8 – 10 weeks or longer. You will have X-Rays to check for healing. If the fracture is displaced, your doctor may recommend surgery to fix the fracture with pins or a screw. Sometimes even with treatment in a cast or surgery, the fracture does not heal. This is scaphoid non-union, and your surgeon is best placed to discuss this problem with you.