



About Colles Fractures

OVERVIEW

Colles fracture involves a break in one or both of the forearm bones (radius and ulna) just above the wrist. Although it can be caused by any strong force, Colles is most often associated with trying to break a forward fall.

1. FALLING

When someone falls forward, it is common to extend the hands and arms to reduce the impact of hitting the ground.

2. THE FRACTURE

The combined pressure of hitting the ground and supporting a sudden load of

body weight can cause the bone just above the wrist to buckle. This is known as a buckle or Colles fracture.

3. SYMPTOMS

Signs of a Colles fracture include pain and swelling just above the wrist and inability to hold or lift heavy objects.

TREATMENT

Treatment ranges from simple immobilization to the use of a lightweight cast on the wrist. A recovery time of six to twelve months is common. A more severe fracture, known as a comminuted fracture, may require pins or screws to hold the bones together while they heal.

