



## **Wrist Sprain**

**Definition:** A wrist sprain is an injury to the ligaments that connect the small bones between the hand and the forearm. These ligaments play a key role in helping to stabilize the wrist.

**Common Terms:** A sprain of a ligament is also called a tear, a stretch, or even a pull.

**Typical Mechanism of Injury:** FOOSH, which stands for “**Fall **On **Out**Stretched **Hand**” is the most common way to sprain a wrist. However, wrist ligaments may also be injured from other blunt force, trauma or twisting injuries.********

**Common Signs and Symptoms:** Pain, swelling, and limited range of motion are commonly seen with wrist sprains. Performing simple tasks, like gripping and opening jars, may be painful. The wrist may also feel unstable or loose with certain activities.

**Common Treatment:** Wrist sprains may be associated with fractures and therefore x-rays are often obtained. Immobilization (splinting, casting) of the wrist may be required to allow for ligaments to heal. Sometimes immobilization alone is not enough for the structures to heal on their own. A surgical procedure to repair the torn structures may be recommended at this time. Ice, elevation and resting the joints from unnecessary activities can also help in the healing process. Rehabilitation exercises are sometimes recommended to help build strength and promote flexibility.

**Prevention:** Learning how to fall properly for sports that involve tackling or activities where a fall to the ground is likely can assist in reducing the number of wrist sprains. Falling correctly involves landing in such a way that minimizes the force on the outstretched wrist. Wearing proper equipment for sport-related activities is also important.

**Expectations:** In some cases, wrist sprains can be mild and result in short-term pain and dysfunction. In other cases, splinting, casting and even surgical intervention may be required, resulting in a much longer recovery.

DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPAEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE  
Carol & Frank Morsani Center for Advanced Health Care \* 13330 USF Laurel Dr \* Tampa, Florida  
33612 \* (813) 396-9625 \* FAX (813) 396-9195 \* [www.health.usf.edu](http://www.health.usf.edu)  
usf**ORTHO**.com