

DISTAL RADIUS FRACTURES

WHEN TO SEND TO THE ER

- Open fracture
- Neurovascular compromise
- Irreducible deformity
- Associated major injuries (elbow dislocation, carpal dislocation, polytrauma)

WHEN TO REFER DIRECTLY TO OUR CLINIC

- Closed fractures (whether reduced or not)
- Fractures in acceptable alignment that need close follow-up
- Unreduced fractures that still require evaluation and reduction – we can perform reductions in clinic and spare patients an ER visit (reach out directly!)

WHY IT MATTERS

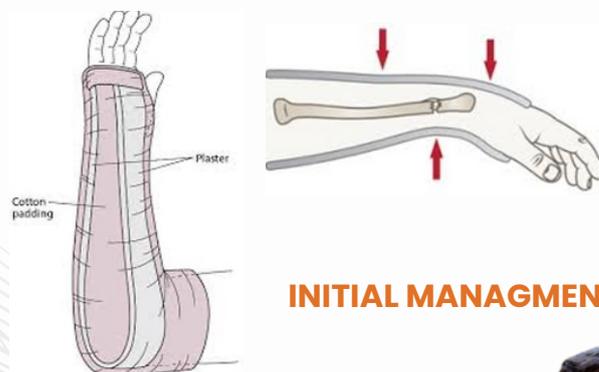
Distal radius fractures are among the most common injuries in urgent care. Correct initial management helps ensure good long-term function.

KEY EXAM PEARLS

- Always document a neurovascular exam (median nerve most commonly affected)
- Look for skin breaks suggesting an open fracture
- Gross deformity usually indicates instability

REDUCTION GUIDANCE

- If there is obvious dorsal displacement/angulation, a gentle closed reduction attempt in urgent care is reasonable using local anesthesia (hematoma block).
- Always obtain post-reduction X-rays.
- Even partial correction improves comfort and neurovascular status.



INITIAL MANAGEMENT

- Splint: Sugar-tong splint preferred for acute immobilization.
- Analgesia: NSAIDs and/or acetaminophen.
- Elevation and ice.



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FUN FACT

Distal radius fractures were first formally described in 1814 by Abraham Colles, which is why you'll still hear the term "Colles fracture" today.



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IMAGING

- Obtain PA, lateral, and oblique wrist X-rays.
- If films are negative but suspicion is high, splint and refer.



BOTTOM LINE

Splint, attempt gentle reduction if comfortable, but referral is appropriate even if no reduction is attempted. Send to the ER only if open, irreducible, neurovascularly compromised, or part of a larger injury pattern.

For more information visit neusteinmd.com or scan the QR code seen below

PRACTICE LOCATIONS

Dawsonville

81 Prominence Court,
Suite 100 Dawsonville,
GA 30534

Braselton

1229 Friendship Road,
Suite 100 Braselton,
GA 30517

Duluth

2320 Peachtree Industrial
Blvd, Suite 103 Duluth,
GA 30097

