



Wrist Arthroscopy

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Wrist arthroscopy is keyhole surgery of the wrist joint. It is usual to make three incisions, each less than 1cm on the back of the wrist to allow a camera and instruments to be inserted into the joint. This allows treatment to be carried out at the same time that the joint is visualised.

The surgery can be performed as a day case procedure under regional anaesthetic with sedation. It is very useful if you are able to stay awake so that you can watch the procedure on the monitor and understand exactly what is going on inside your wrist. If you want heavy sedation then photographs will be available for you to see later.

Visualising the joint allows an accurate diagnosis to be made and assessment of the joint surfaces and the integrity of the ligaments can be fully assessed. It is possible to perform procedures

with shavers and suction devices to remove debris and loose flaps from the articular cartilage or triangular fibrocartilaginous complex which is a common cause of ulnar sided wrist pain.

At the end of the procedure a dressing is put onto the wrist which is left in place for five days. This can then be removed at home and replaced with simple adhesive dressings. During this time the thumb and fingers are free so that essential activities can be continued.

Although the wounds on the hand will heal within ten days, the deeper tissues will settle over a period of about six to eight weeks. It is therefore sometimes not possible to be sure how much benefit you have had from the surgery until the deep tissues have had a chance to settle. The recovery and prognosis is obviously going to be affected by the underlying diagnosis and you will be advised of this after your procedure.

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