

Wrist Injury TFCC

The triangular fibrocartilage complex is a **ligament like structure that helps provide stability** between the radius and ulna during forearm rotation. It attaches between the radius and ulna, lying between the distal end of the ulna and the proximal row of carpal bones.

Cause:

It is **commonly injured** during falls and sporting injuries.

Symptoms:

- Pain is the most common feature. It causes ulnar sided wrist pain.
- Can be difficult to differentiate from extensor carpi ulnaris (ECU) tendinopathy and subluxation as the floor of the ECU compartment is formed by the dorsal TFCC.
- **Minor injuries are common and may only be recognised years later** when an MRI is requested for other reasons.
- If it is a severe injury it may cause instability, like your wrist is going to give way.

Diagnosis:

- History and examination findings are important as x-rays are usually normal.
- Stability of the distal radioulnar joint (DRUJ) should be checked.
- **MRI is the best investigation** to assess soft tissue injuries including the TFCC. It rarely changes the treatment prescribed so it is not routinely requested.

Treatment:

Nonoperative treatment is usually successful but can take 6-12 months. This includes;

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs: Ibuprofen or similar). A topical NSAID may have less side effects;
- Avoiding activities that cause pain;
- Splinting and strengthening (Supervised by a hand therapist).

Surgery is recommended when the DRUJ is unstable or nonoperative treatment has failed. Options include;

- Arthroscopy and debridement.
- Arthroscopic repair.
- Open repair
- Ulna shortening osteotomy. Shortening the ulna will lead to reduced pressure in the TFCC region and potentially a reduction in your symptoms.

