

MIKE FOSTER

Hand Wrist and Elbow

Scaphoid Non Union

Problem

- The scaphoid bone has failed to heal. This causes ongoing pain and eventually leads to wrist arthritis

Cause

- The scaphoid has a tenuous, retrograde blood supply and is surrounded by synovial fluid. This makes it one of the most common bones to develop a non union.

Diagnosis

- Pain in the 'snuff box'.
- Weakness of grip strength.
- Decreased wrist movement.
- X-rays usually confirm the diagnosis.
- CT scan to look for a 'humpback' deformity.
- MRI scan to assess blood supply to the bone.

Treatment

- Surgery - GA – Day surgery or Overnight Stay
Incision on back of wrist, or front of wrist.
Debridement of non union site.
Packing with bone graft (from distal radius).
Humpback deformities require structured graft from the hip.
Fixation with cannulated screw.

Potential Complications

- Infection, haematoma, nerve injury
- Stiffness in wrist.
- Non Union or malunion, about 10 %

Post Op Care

- Cast for 8 to 12 weeks.
- Hand therapy and protective splint once out of plaster.
- Unable to use hand for heavy lifting until bone healed.