

Why wrists are a common casualty of winter

January 12 2023, by Jason Howland



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Winter weather tends to cause a spike in visits to the emergency department, and wrist injuries are one of the biggest reasons. Dr. Sanj Kakar, an orthopedic hand and wrist surgeon at Mayo Clinic, says walking on ice and snow can be treacherous and force people to make tough split-second decisions.

When winter brings ice and snow, slipping, sliding and falling become a problem.

"And immediately, if you think when you fall, you're going to put your wrist out. And what will happen is that will brace your fall, and all your [body weight](#) goes through there," Dr. Kakar says.

Dr. Kakar always sees an increase in wrist injuries immediately after [winter storms](#), especially among older people whose bones may become weak over time because of conditions like osteoporosis.

In most cases, Dr. Kakar says four to six weeks in a cast to let the bone heal is the [best treatment](#), assuming it's lined up properly, but sometimes surgery is necessary.

But avoiding a wrist injury when you fall on ice is difficult.

"I think when we fall, it's a split-second decision on how we're going to fall," Dr. Kakar says. "And the problem is if you fall onto your wrist, there's a high chance of a wrist fracture. If you fall down, for example, on your hip, then there's a hip fracture."

Dr. Kakar says if you have to walk in snow or on ice, it's best to slow down and have something or someone to hold onto in case you start to fall.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

Citation: Why wrists are a common casualty of winter (2023, January 12) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-wrists-common-casualty-winter.html>

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