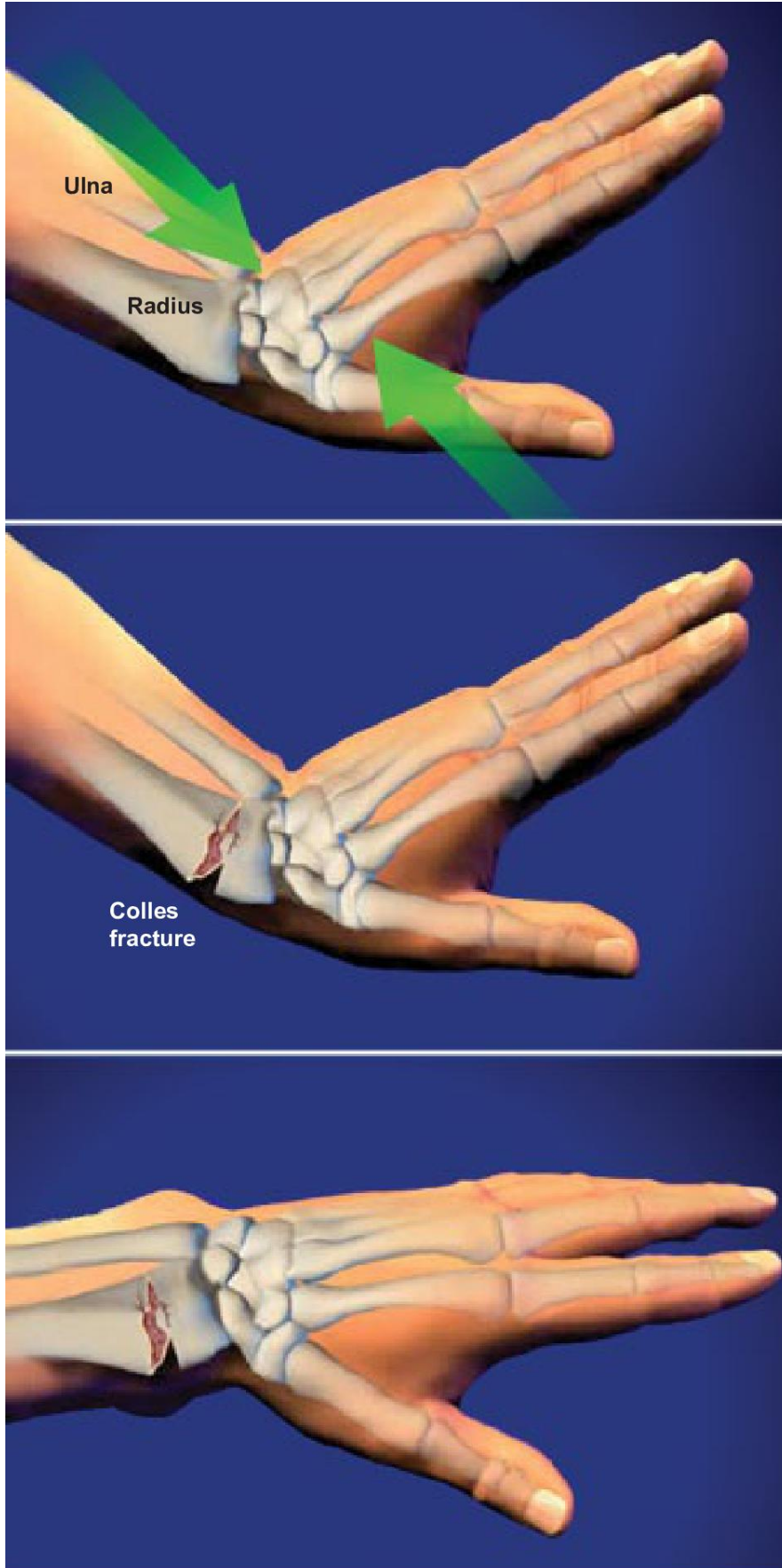




Colles Fractures



Overview

Colles fracture is a break of one or both of the forearm bones (called the radius and ulna) that occurs just above the wrist. Although this type of injury can be caused by any strong force, Colles is most often associated with trying to break a forward fall.

Breaking a Fall

A person who falls forward will commonly try to break the fall by extending the hands and arms to reduce the impact of hitting the ground.

The Fracture

The combined pressure of hitting the ground and supporting a sudden load of body weight can cause the bones of the forearm to break just above the wrist. This is known as a buckle, or a Colles fracture.

Symptoms

Signs of a Colles fracture include pain and swelling just above the wrist and the inability to hold or lift heavy objects.

Treatment

Treatment ranges from simple immobilization to the use of a lightweight cast on the wrist. Recovery commonly lasts from six to twelve months. Severe fractures in which the bone is splintered or broken into many pieces may require pins or screws to hold the bones together while they heal.