

Advice after a mallet finger injury

Virtual Fracture Clinic

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

You have snapped the tendon that normally straightens the end joint of the finger (see figure 1). The tendon may even have pulled off a small fragment of bone. This causes the tip of the finger to lie in a bent position which means you will be unable to straighten it.

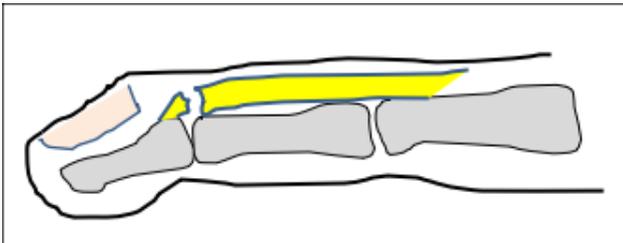


Figure 1 shows a mallet finger injury

What is the treatment?

- We will put a splint on your finger. You should wear this continuously, even at night, to keep the finger straight for six weeks).
- At the end of this time, you will need to wear the splint for the next month at night and whenever the finger might be at risk of injury.
- During this time, it is important to keep the finger straight, even when taking the splint off to wash.
- You can do this by placing your hand flat on a table, removing the splint and cleaning the finger. Replace the splint without bending your finger.
- Try to limit washing the finger as much as possible to reduce the chance of the finger bending. Initially aim for cleaning the finger twice a week.
- It is important to keep the finger and splint dry to avoid skin irritation.
- We will refer you to a hand therapist for exercises at an appropriate stage.

How long will it take to heal?

Most of these injuries heal without any problems; however, it may take several months for you to regain the full function of your finger.

After you have stopped using the splint (around 10 weeks), it is important to keep gently moving the finger and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will help improve any stiffness and ensure the safest return to normal function. If you are struggling to get the movement back, please contact the Fracture Clinic on 01384 456111 ext. 2220.

There may be redness, swelling and slight pain over the joint for a few months afterwards. This will settle.

You may be left with a small bump or be unable to straighten the finger fully. If this happens, it is unfortunately a permanent feature but it will not affect the function of your finger.

Occasionally, even after three months of treatment with a splint, the tendon may fail to heal. Most fingers function well despite a droop at the end joint. However, your consultant may consider whether you should have a surgical procedure known as fusion of the end joint.

If you have any worries or concerns, or need to ask about returning to work or sport, please contact one of the following:

- **Virtual Fracture Clinic helpline on ext. 3547 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or email dqft.vfc.dudley@nhs.net**
- **Fracture Clinic on 01384 456111 ext. 2220 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)**
- **Emergency Department on 01384 456111 ext. 2300**

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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