

Patient information factsheet

Mallet finger injuries

We have given you this factsheet because you have sustained a mallet finger injury. It explains what a mallet finger injury is, how it is treated and how to care for your finger while it recovers. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

What are mallet finger injuries?

Mallet finger injuries are caused by damage to the tendon or the bony attachment of the tendon, which normally allows you to straighten the tip of your finger. As a result of the injury, the fingertip droops.

Treatment

The aim of treatment is to return your fingertip to as near normal a position as possible. This will take at least six to eight weeks. However, success cannot be guaranteed.

We will apply a splint to your fingertip to hold it slightly bent beyond its usual position (hyperextension). It's essential to look after and change your splints to achieve a good result. If your finger droops at any time, it may be necessary to start the splinting process again from the beginning.

We will see you regularly for a review and to check for any problems. The splint will be held on by tape, which may cause problems with your circulation if applied too tightly. If you find the splint is being pulled flat and is no longer holding your fingertip up as well as before, please phone us to make an appointment to have it changed as soon as you can. We will show you how to check your fingertip after a change of splint.

Recovery

If your fingertip is painful, throbs or looks red after having the splint changed, try raising your hand up above head height for some time. If the discomfort continues, loosen the tape slightly (if you're confident doing this without your fingertip drooping). Alternatively, please contact us.

Removal

Please do not remove the splint, as your fingertip must be supported at all times. Although wearing the splint may be inconvenient, it must be kept on day and night. Removal will delay your progress and result in further weeks of splint use.

Aftercare

Keep the splint as clean and dry as possible. When bathing, showering or washing your hands, place a plastic bag over the splint to keep it dry. Getting your finger wet may cause the tape to loosen and may also make your skin sore (as may wearing the finger stools

or waterproof glove for long periods). If you get the splint wet, it must be changed. If this happens, please contact us.

Once we have removed the splint, we may ask you to move your finger gently to begin with and wear the splint at night just for protection. We will also show you some specific exercises to do to help with your recovery.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Hand therapy team

Therapy outpatients

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