

Mallet Injuries

Patient Information

Hand Therapy



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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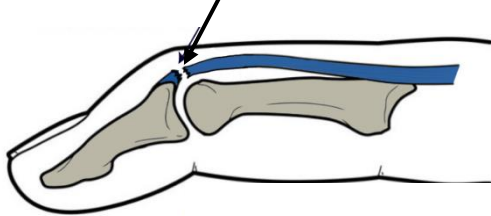


Introduction

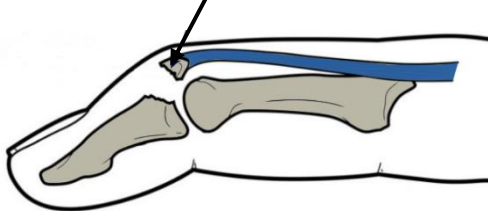
Mallet finger or mallet injury is a term used to describe an injury to the tip of a finger, or more uncommonly, the thumb. It usually occurs following a force or 'stubbing' to the tip of the digit, causing it to bend.

Two types of mallet injury can occur.

Tendon rupture next to joint (Mallet Injury)



Tendon pulled off with bony fragment (Bony Mallet Injury)



1. A soft tissue mallet is caused by snapping the tendon that straightens the end of the digit.
2. A bony mallet is caused by a break/fracture of the portion of bone that the tendon is attached to.

Both types result in the fingertip drooping down, with an inability to straighten it up.

To establish which injury you have, an Xray will be taken.

In some bony mallet injuries, the portion of bone that fractures can be quite large; this can potentially affect the function of the joint. Patients with this type of injury can have very good outcomes with Hand Therapy and splinting. In order to plan the most effective treatment, these patients may also see a Consultant Hand Surgeon.

Treatment



Mallet fingers are treated using a splint. You may have a temporary splint put on your finger initially. You will then have one custom-made by a Hand Therapist, as seen in the image.

The splint needs to be worn continuously 24 hours a day, every day, for 6 to 8 weeks. You will then be advised how to wean from the splint.

Please do not remove your splint unless you have been shown how to do this safely by your therapist.

The splint is made of a material which allows wet skin to dry naturally; therefore you should be able to use your hand normally with the splint in place; however, it is advisable to avoid direct force/pressure to the splint.

Exercises

It is important to maintain the movement in all the other joints in the hand whilst the splint is on. Once the splint is removed after 6 to 8 weeks, your therapist will teach you further exercises as appropriate, following assessment.

Expectations

Most injuries heal without any problems, although it may take several months to regain full function.

Short Term (0-12 weeks)

It is common to experience ongoing swelling and discomfort over the back of the finger joint initially. This can last for several weeks to months in some cases. You may also experience increased sensitivity over the back of the finger joint. Your therapist will advise you how to apply desensitisation techniques and manage the swelling.

Long Term (12 weeks+)

You may be left with a small bump over the back of the finger joint permanently. Your finger may not be completely straight following treatment, although considerably improved. Neither of these features should impact upon the ability to use your finger/ hand normally.

Contact Information

You will be under the care of a Hand Therapist during the time you are in a splint, and until you have re-gained functional use of your hand. You will be provided with contact details for the specific Therapy Department you are attending. However, if you have any concerns, you can contact the Hand Therapy Team in Fracture Clinic at Wigan Infirmary Monday to Friday from 8am until 5pm on 01942 822103.

Reference

<https://fifevirtualhandclinic.co.uk/>

Acknowledgement

Thank you to NHS Scotland for allowing free access/use of their images.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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