

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your finger injury. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a mallet finger?

You have snapped the tendon that normally straightens the end joint of the finger. The tendon may have pulled off a small fragment of bone. This results in the tip of the finger to lie in a bent position and you are unable to straighten it.

How long will this take to heal?

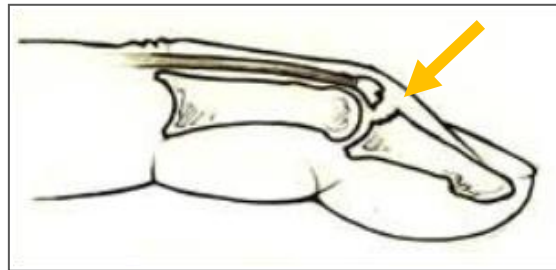
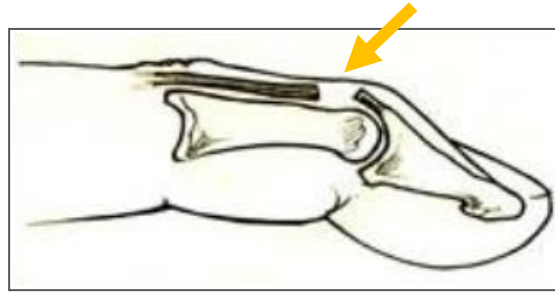
Most injuries heal without any problems however it may take several months to regain normal function

What are the treatment options?

Usual treatment involves painkillers and a splint.

Will I need follow up?

Routine follow up is not necessary due to the nature of the injury. Hand therapy or physiotherapy is advised to commence at 6-8 weeks post injury. Please ask your GP for a referral.



Are there any complications?

There may be redness, swelling and slight pain over the joint for a few months which will settle. You may be left with a small bump or unable to straighten the finger fully. This will be permanent but will not affect normal function.

How will this be managed?

A splint will be applied and should be worn continuously, even at night, to keep the finger straight for 8 weeks.

During this time, it is important to keep the finger straight, even when taking the splint off to wash. This can be done by placing the hand flat on a table, removing the splint and cleaning the finger. Replace the splint without bending the finger.



At the end of the 8 weeks, the splint is worn for a further 4 weeks at night and whenever the finger might be at risk of injury.

After the splint has stopped being used (around 12 weeks) it is important to keep moving the finger gently and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will help improve any stiffness and ensure the safest return to normal function.

Is there anything to avoid?

Washing the finger as little as possible to reduce chance of the finger bending.

Aim to clean the finger twice a week. It is important to keep the finger and splint dry to avoid skin irritation.

Smoking cessation

Stopping smoking will ensure optimal recovery from this injury therefore it is important to consider this advice. For more information and help, contact your GP or refer to NHS website <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>.

What are the options if I am unable to straighten my finger over time?

Occasionally the tendon fails to heal and the finger ends up with a significant droop at the end joint. Surgical fusion of the end joint can then be considered. Your own GP will need to refer you for this.

Contacting the team

If you are struggling to get movement back, have any concerns or require any further advice, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic team on 01279 97 3362 Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm.

Out of hours please contact the Orthopaedic Resident Doctor on-call via Switchboard on 01279444455

We value your views on our service

We want to hear from you when someone goes the extra mile to provide outstanding care.

Please call us on 01279 827084 or email: paht.compliments@nhs.net

To speak about an issue or complaint

To ensure we can fix problems early on and address any issues please call our patient advice liaison (PALS) team on 01279 827211 or email paht.pals@nhs.net

Accessibility

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net or 01279 827926 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.



The Princess Alexandra
Hospital
NHS Trust

Patient information

Mallet finger injury

Orthopaedic Department

V2 | SCC | Orthopaedic Department |
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modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration