

Mallet finger

Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have a condition known as a mallet finger. It includes information about what a mallet finger is, how it is treated and what to do when you get home.

What is a mallet finger?

A mallet finger is an injury to the end joint of your finger; the tendon which straightens the finger has been damaged. It can be either a bone or tendon injury. This causes the fingertip to droop and it cannot straighten itself without help. Usual causes include:

- When the finger is hit by something hard such as a cricket ball.
- By stubbing the finger, for example, when putting hands in pockets.

How is it treated?

Your finger will be put in a splint to support the injury. You will need to wear this continuously for either six weeks (bone injury) or eight weeks (tendon injury). After this period, you will need to continue wearing your splint at night and when doing activities during the day

for two further weeks. If the splint is taken off before this treatment period, it may not heal and can cause the tip of the finger to droop permanently.

You will need to keep the finger and splint dry, as well as cleaning the finger regularly for hygiene reasons.

You will be given an appointment to return to the fracture clinic for review at the appropriate time.

What do I need to do?

- Do not bend the tip of the injured finger (healing starts again from the last time it was bent)
- Use over-the-counter painkillers as needed
- Elevate the injured hand.
- You can return to work or school as soon as pain allows and can carry out normal duties, carefully
- You should avoid sport and games for at least eight weeks after the injury
- Avoid wearing rings on the injured finger until it has healed as it can restrict the blood circulation to the finger
- Exercise all your joints in the hand, except the joint that has the splint on it.
- Make sure you attend your follow up appointments

How do I clean my finger/general splint care

The splinted finger must always be kept clean and dry. If the skin becomes wet inside the splint, it will become very sore. It's important to wash both your finger and the splint at least once a day, following these instructions:

- Keep your finger flat on the table with your palms facing downwards, cut the strapping, and slide the splint off your finger and keep your finger there until the splint is replaced.
- Wash and dry your finger and the splint using soap and water. Always keep the end joint straight by keeping your finger flat on the table. You may find it easier if someone

helps you to do this. Any movement of the end of the finger will delay healing and may even cause permanent damage.

- Slide the splint back over the fingertip, keeping the finger straight.
- Replace the strapping – this should cover the middle of the splint but not the middle joint of the finger.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblink:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mallet-finger/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/accident-emergency/>

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.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

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.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔