

# 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 when the tendon that straightens the finger has been damaged. In people who have this, the end joint of a finger will bend but it cannot straighten by itself. It is usually caused:

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

### How is it treated?

We will put a splint on your finger. This usually has to stay in place for about six weeks to allow your finger to heal. The splint should only be removed during this time to allow the finger to be cleaned (see page 2 for specific cleaning instructions). If it is taken off before this time, your finger will not heal properly and the droop on your finger may become permanent.

## What do I need to do?

- Keep your hand raised as much as possible.
- Exercise all of your joints in the hand, except the joint that has the splint on it.
- Make sure you attend your follow-up appointments. This is where we will check that your finger is healing properly.
- Take regular painkillers if you are experiencing pain (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose).
- **Do not** bend the finger. Even during cleaning, your finger must be kept straight and at all other times, the splint must be kept in place.
- **Do not** put any rings or jewellery back on the finger – even if it is not swollen. Your finger may swell at various times throughout the healing process and rings will restrict the circulation of your blood to it.

## How do I clean my finger?

1. Place your finger on a flat surface with your palm facing downwards. Keep your finger there until the splint is replaced.
2. Clean your finger and the splint and ensure they are both dry before reapplying the splint.
3. Slide the splint back into place and re-tape to the finger. The splint must be applied to allow the knuckle and next joint to bend and straighten freely.

### **Please make sure that:**

- During cleaning, you keep your finger straight.
- You clean both the splint and your finger.

## Follow-up care

The Emergency Department clinician will determine the most appropriate follow-up for you. This will be determined by whether the injury involves the bone or not.

If the injury does involve the bone, the severity of the bone injury will also dictate the follow-up care needed.

The clinician will discuss the follow-up arrangements needed with you and how, when and where you will be followed-up before you leave the department.

## 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](mailto: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.

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