

Mallet Finger



**Information for you if you have attended
the Minor Injury Unit**

Telephone: 0300 125 6800 (Yate MIU) | 01275 546852 (North Somerset MIU) | 0300 124 6260 (Bristol MIU)



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the Sirona care and health website.**

What is a mallet finger?

A mallet finger is caused by rupture of the tendon to the tip of the finger. Sometimes, the tendon may pull off its bony attachment. As a result, you are unable to straighten your fingertip on its own, although it can be pushed straight. Unsupported, the fingertip will have a characteristic 'droop'. In most cases, it is not painful, but more of a nuisance.

How is the mallet finger treated?

Your finger is placed in a special plastic splint holding the tip straight for 6 – 8 weeks. During this time, the fingertip must be kept straight at all times, so healing can take place. It is essential that you carefully follow the instructions given to allow healing

Your splint

Your splint should be a comfortable fit, not too tight or loose. If it becomes loose, then you should return to us for a better fitting splint.

The splint holds the tip joint straight, but should allow full movement of the middle joint of the finger to avoid it stiffening.

You must ensure that the finger stays dry within the splint, which is not an easy task! Use a large protective rubber glove. Should your finger get wet inside the splint, then you will need to remove the splint and dry it and your finger.

Each time you remove the splint you increase the risk of bending your finger and re-damaging the healing tendon. So, only remove it when absolutely necessary i.e. when the finger and splint need cleaning or if they get wet.

When removing the splint

It is essential to follow the instructions below and it is helpful if you have someone else around when you do it.

- First, place your hand on a flat, firm surface i.e. a table.
 - Loosen the tape and gently remove the splint keeping your finger flat on the table.
 - Wash the top and sides of your finger with soap and water. To get underneath you can lift the finger up on its tip (maintaining the straight position).
 - Dry the finger thoroughly.
 - The splint will also need cleaning, but it is easier if someone does this for you.
 - Carefully slide the splint back into place without allowing any bend, re-tape and secure. Make sure that the tape does not restrict the movement of the middle joint of the finger.
 - You will soon get used to this routine and it should be followed for the full 8 weeks.

After the 8 weeks

Follow up will be arranged by the Plastics Team.

In summary

- Keep your splint on
- Keep your fingertip straight
- Keep it dry

You will be referred to the specialist hand clinic within the next few days, who will review your finger injury and continue to manage your care.

Pain relief medication

Pain relief medication can help you to reduce the pain allowing you to undertake any suggested exercises and movements of the injury. Moving will help ease the pain and speed up your recovery significantly. Simple pain relief medications such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen are often all that is required. Please read the medication instructions before taking anything.

Call 111 if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

We want you and the people who help you to understand what we send. If you need help with this letter or leaflet, please tell us.

We can help with larger print, audio (a message to listen to), Easy read, British Sign Language or this information in another language.

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