

Patient Information
Emergency Department

Discharge advice following attendance with a “mallet finger” injury



Medway NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free organisation. As a healthcare provider, we believe it is important to provide the best possible environment for our patients, visitors and staff.

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

A splint will be applied and should be worn continuously, even at night, to keep the finger straight for 8 weeks (6 weeks if there is a bony fragment).

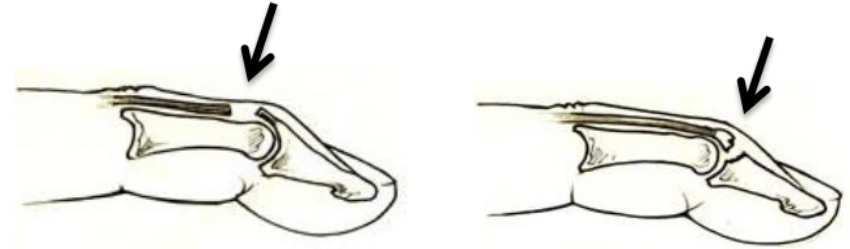
During this time, it is important to keep the finger straight, even when taking the splint off to wash. This can be done by placing the hand flat on a table, removing the splint and cleaning the finger. Replace the splint without bending the finger.

At the end of this time the splint is worn for the next one month at night and whenever the finger might be at risk of injury.

Try to limit washing the finger as little as possible to reduce the chance of the finger bending. Initially aim for cleaning the finger twice a week. It is important to keep the finger and splint dry to avoid skin irritation.

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

After the splint has stopped being used (around 10-12 weeks) it is important to keep gently moving the finger and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will help improve any stiffness and ensure the safest return to normal function. If you are struggling to get the movement back please contact the fracture clinic (see below).



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 be unable to straighten the finger fully. This will be permanent but will not affect normal function.

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.

If you have any concerns about your finger contact the fracture clinic on:

07760553994

Monday to Friday 11.00am to 5.00pm