

PATIENT INFORMATION – MALLET FINGER

What is mallet finger?

Mallet finger is where the tendon that straightens the end joint of your finger has been torn. This means that your fingertip now droops and you cannot straighten it properly.

Treatment

You have been given a splint to keep the joint straight while you are using your hand. If you do need to take it off, for e.g to wash your finger then you must keep the finger straight and not allow it to bend or flex.

What you should do:

- Keep your hand raised and try to exercise all the joints except the one in the splint
- Wear the splint all the time and ensure that it is snug
- Check that you have been booked for the clinic

What you should not do:

- Bend the end joint of your finger at all
- Wear any rings on your hand until the finger has healed so that you do not get problems with your circulation

Cleaning your finger and the splint

The splinted finger must be kept clean and dry at all times. 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, cut the strapping, and slide the splint off your finger.
- Wash and dry your finger and the splint using soap and water. Keep the end joint straight at all times by keeping your finger flat on the table. You may find it easier if someone helps you to do this each day, as any movement of the end of the finger will delay healing of the tendon and may even cause permanent damage.
- Slide the splint back over the fingertip, still keeping the finger straight.
- Replace the strapping – this should cover the middle of the splint but should not cover the middle joint of the finger.

How long will it take to heal?

It should heal within 6-8 weeks and you should be able to use your finger as normal. You may still be advised to wear the splint in the night for a few more weeks. It may take several months to regain full function. Redness, swelling and tenderness of the skin around the end of the finger are common for three or four months after injury, but usually settle eventually. You may be left with a small bump on the top of the joint and a slight loss of ability to straighten the joint (it never really goes completely back to normal). However, the finger should generally function well.

Further Advice/Instructions

Please use this section to give the patient specific information e.g. follow up appointments or after care advice.

You should be seen in the Accident and Emergency Department in _____ days

You should make an appointment to see your GP in _____ days

Other:

MALLET FINGER CONT.



If you become unwell or are injured, choose the right NHS service to make sure you get the best treatment. The Choose Well campaign explains what each NHS service does, and when it should be used.

Choosing well means that you and your family will get the best treatment. It also allows busy NHS services to help the people who need them most.

If you are unsure about which option to choose, please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or visit the Choose Well website at www.choosewellwales.org.uk

This information has been produced based on previous information leaflets and the evidence available at the time of publication. It has been clinically reviewed however if you notice anything that needs updating or amending please contact ppi.team@wales.nhs.uk

If you require this information in another language or format please ask a member of staff.

For further advice or information contact NHS Direct Wales 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk