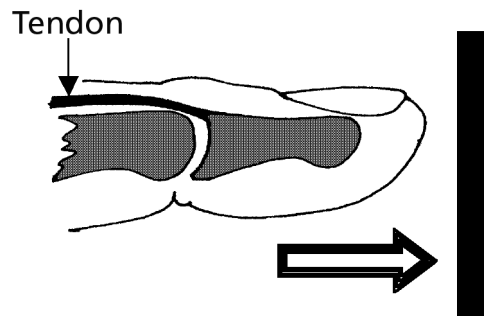
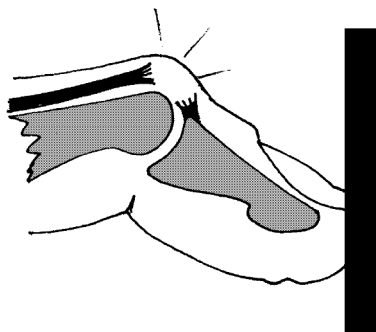


Mallet Finger: What is it?

Mallet finger is a common injury. It can occur in a number of ways, but most commonly when a straight finger is stubbed and forced to bend suddenly at the joint near the tip. The tendon on the back of the joint snaps or pulls off its attachment to bone. As a result you can no longer straighten the finger at this joint except by lifting it with your other hand. The finger adopts a dropped or mallet position.

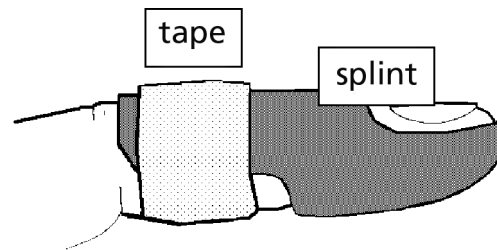


Snap!



The Mallet Finger splint:

The mallet finger splint is a simple and effective way to treat this injury. We hope these notes will help you to look after your finger yourself. You need return to the hospital only if you have problems or if we have asked you to return because your injury requires special attention.



The splint is designed to keep the joint straight while the tendon heals. When the joint is straight there is only a small gap between the ends of the tendon. Scar tissue forms in the gap and makes a snug repair. Without the splint the finger drops, creating a large gap in the tendon. This leads to a slack repair and the finger remains in the dropped position.

Correct use of the splint:

Treatment is most likely to succeed if the splint is:

1. Always taped securely in place.
2. Worn constantly for **6 weeks**.

To wash the finger, gently rest the tip, palm side down, on the edge of a table or similar surface. Remove the tape and carefully slide the splint off. Wash the skin and dry it thoroughly before re-applying the splint.

Secure the splint soundly with fresh tape. Support the tip of the finger on the table and keep the joint straight all the time you are doing this.

What to expect when you remove the splint after 6 weeks:

1. At first the finger may not bend easily at the joint which has been splinted. This will wear off in a few days.
2. If the finger is perfectly straight, you have an excellent result. Often it drops a little, a day or two after the splint is removed. This will not cause any practical problems and in most cases the drop slowly disappears over the next year or so.
3. The finger may be slightly red, swollen and sensitive to knocks for a number of months. It will settle down without treatment.

Do's and Don'ts:

The splint is designed to interfere as little as possible with normal use of your hand. Normal use will prevent stiffness of the uninjured parts of your finger and the rest of your hand.

You will be unable to return to work only if:

- the splint would infringe food safety regulations.
- the splint would put you at risk of further injury on machinery.
- your hands are constantly exposed

to wet or very dirty conditions and you cannot protect them by wearing gloves.

When to call for advice?

You should call for advice if you experience any of the following problems:

- the splint becomes too tight.
- you develop sores in the skin under the splint.
- your finger drops **very badly** when you remove it at the end of 6 weeks.

Contact Number:

Fracture Clinic
at
Arrowe Park Hospital

0151 604 7069

between 9am and 11am
Mon – Fri

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille and on tape.
Please contact Geoff Pennock on 0151 604 7289.



Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust operates a No Smoking Policy.
Please refrain from smoking on site.

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Mallet Finger

Information For Patients

Fracture & Orthopaedic Clinic
Arrowe Park Hospital